JESUS AND JUDAS

J. M. ROBERTSON

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JESUS AND JUDAS

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JESUS AND JUDAS

A TEXTUAL AND HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION

BY

J. M. ROBERTSON

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PREFACE

A YEAR ago it was suggested that an appropriate motto for a work on the non-historicity of Jesus would be "Bishop Gore's latest pronouncement: 'Acceptance of the story of Christ remains an act of faith. There can be nothing demonstrable in history.'" That citation is indeed noteworthy as indicating how little support is given by the more religious spirits to the common position that Christianity stands on a rational footing. Cardinal Newman, it will be remembered, made the still more remarkable declaration—probably unacceptable to Dr. Gore—that there is little in the ethic of Christianity which had not been anticipated in older literature. He knew that even the cry, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do," is pagan.

It would hardly be fair, however, to suggest that other Christian scholars are in any way bound by the avowals of eminent Christians who outgo them in force of faith. In any case, the present work necessarily addresses itself to men and women who honestly believe in the existence of Jesus as a historical fact, however much they may have discarded of the mass of beliefs with which that was

formerly associated. That they should regard the myth theory as an extravagance is the more easily understood by the writer because in his youth, some fifty years ago, he so regarded it. Having delivered a lecture on "The Jesus of Renan and the Jesus of Strauss," he was met by a friend's challenge: "Why do you take it for granted that there was a Jesus at all?" Whereupon he smiled —not, indeed, with the ineffable superiority of the modernist Christian (that is unattainable by others), but quite superiorly—and tranquilly replied, "That is an extravagance."

In a sense it was; for the old myth theory, derived mainly from Dupuis and Volney, took account mainly of the arguments from astral and solar mythology—a body of lore really important, and calling for full recognition and investigation in any complete myth theory, but by itself inadequate to the explanation of much of the gospel story. It was only after many years of acceptance of the historicity of Jesus that the writer was driven, upon a long and close inquiry, to surrender it as untenable.

The following pages indicate, among other things, how the argument, since developed by various hands, is commonly ignored, or idly derided, or, when seriously met by argument, only formally rebutted. But whereas the case for the

myth theory, originally set forth in large volumes, is apt, even in concise statements, to repel by an air of abstractness all save the more studious readers, it is here approached, in terms of a new textual analysis, on a particular line of concrete narrative and of direct challenge to that. All who are concerned at all about the truth of Christianity may reasonably be invited to make that approach, and to note how the myth theory here comes into action. From that concrete standpoint, the whole myth theory is indicated in outline.

Professor Burkitt is doubtless right in confessing that interest in the problems of Christian origins is declining in mass; even as Bishop Ellicott confessed fifty years ago that "the thoughtful and critical study of the Scriptures is becoming increasingly neglected." The process is clearly cumulative. But Dr. Burkitt would perhaps be in agreement with many rationalists in granting that such mere surrender to indifference is not of the best augury for the intellectual life; and that even a scientific classification of Christianity as a product of folk-lore and myth-making rendered viable by ecclesiastical organization, is preferable to sheer unconcern about the whole matter. Without hesitation, one assumes that he has no word to say for the conservation of a cult not believed in by its official exponents.

Short of that extremity of cynicism, however, there are, it would seem, not a few who would rather see a placid continuance of the forms of faith, in the lack of a faith in the substance, than any strict inquiry into the whole problem. By such, perhaps, the myth theory is regarded with more impatience than it is by many who sincerely reject it.

Our comment must be the saying of Whately, so much more pregnant than whole batteries of religious texts : " It makes all the difference in the world whether we put truth in the first place or in the second." That is the saying of a prelate who was quite festively confident of the truth of the miracle stories in the gospels, now abandoned by so many men of light and leading in his Church. In the circumstances he may be regarded by some of his own house as a dangerous prophet, seeing how opinion has travelled.

After Whately came Seeley, whose ' Ecce Homo,' proclaiming a non-divine but a super-man Jesus, was much resented by the faithful of his day, the dimly prescient Lord Shaftesbury branding it as the worst book " ever vomited from the mouth of hell," though the otherwise prescient Gladstone took it under his powerful protection. Seeley's heresy is become academic orthodoxy ; and still the work of reconsideration proceeds.

The innovators and accommodators of the past are either to be humanely ranked as faithful to what they held to be truth, or black-listed as practitioners of the "economy of truth" understood to be justified by some Jesuits. Giving them in mass the benefit of the doubt, the new heretic can fitly challenge his gainsayers to live up to his principle. To generate the suspicion that a vast mass of gravely proclaimed opinion is in any large degree mere convention is to do even worse service to social stability than to scientific truth. And the one way to escape such a degeneration is to reason problems out.

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Part I

THE JUDAS MYTH

I.—The Literary Problem

An English poet, Mr. Frank Kendon, selecting a notable theme, has recently published a poem entitled 'A Life and Death of Judas Iscariot,' of which the narrative, he tells us, "intends to supply a consistent and human character to fit the facts and limitations of a well-known story." And whereas he has made "changes.....in the character of Judas as the evangelists report it," he claims that these are "justified on the grounds of imaginative truth." Such a plea and such an experiment are, of course, warranted by poetic practice from the Greek tragedians onwards. They took what they called a myth from poetry or folklore, and handled it in the light of their imagination, as the Elizabethan dramatists took legends and chronicles for *their* purposes.

Mr. Kendon, in turn, assumes that his subject is historical. Whether he has made anything lastingly effective out of it, poetically or psychologically, is a question for future literary criticism, not to be discussed in the present connection. Fifteen years ago Mr. Eden Phillpotts handled the same theme in a simpler and perhaps more impressive fashion, in a more nervous and dramatic blank verse, and with another kind of "imaginative truth." And there have been, I believe, other

attempts, in other languages,[1] in addition to Mr. J. W. T. Hart's 'Autobiography of Judas Iscariot,' published in 1884, which in adequately vivid prose offers perhaps as good a construction as any, from the point of view of fictive art.

But constructions of this kind are not special to the modern period. Such speculation, in fact, dates back to the early ages of the Church, when, in the second century, according to Epiphanius (d. 403), some of the "Cainites" held that Judas betrayed Jesus because he had come to see in him a dangerous person who was destroying law and order; while others declared that the betrayal was a good action, designedly done to bring about human salvation by compelling the Jewish priestly authorities to sacrifice a good man, and thereby to overthrow their own power. According to Irenæus, who wrote earlier (177–202), the Cainites "produce a fictitious history, which they style the Gospel of Judas"; and from other passages in the same writer's work[2] it would seem that Judas figured in one of the many Gnostic schemes as a "suffering Æon," the twelfth in order. The account in Epiphanius points to a less fantastic doctrine. The Cainites, in fact, may be put on record as the first to try to frame a quasi-rational theory of the gospel story. But the small modern Christian child who asked her mother, "Oughtn't we to be much obliged to Judas for what he did?", expressed what was probably a not uncommon sentiment in all ages among scrupulous Christians.

[1] The list, which is a long one, includes a medieval romance and an Elizabethan play (not preserved) by Samuel Rowley. The matter has been gone into in an essay by Dr. A. Luther, *Jesus und Judas in der Dichtung* (Hanau, 1910).

[2] *Against Heresies*, I, xxxi, 1; II, xx, 2–5.

For here was an "inspired" tale of a man charged with "betraying" an Omnipotence which at the same time is revealed as betraying him. For Judas is not merely foreordained like other people to do whatsoever he does: his action is predicted by inspired prophets who are vouched for by God Incarnate; and he "goes to his place," in Tartarus and in history, with the burden of an execration unmatched even in Christian history. And though the Cainites seem to have been Gnostic eccentrics, perhaps vegetarians, it is still significant that in the second century, when the orthodox were accepting the story of Ananias and Sapphira, and learning to make Ananias, not Peter, the supreme type of liar, there were some who revolted from the whole reason-wronging ethic at work, and sought a way out, even on the religious plane.

It is for modern historic science, studying the remains of ancient Christianity without prejudice and without historic presupposition, to reach a firmer judgment than that framed by undisciplined intuitionists in an age of manifold delusion and no less manifold fabrication, to solve a problem as to which they made no inductive scrutiny. That problem, it may be noted, is not faced in such a work as the recent 'Life of Jesus' by Mr. Middleton Murry. Even he, indeed, avows that he rejects certain incidents in the synoptics as "apocryphal," besides dismissing the fourth gospel as "unhistorical." It is not clear why, since he accepts some of the most impossible miracles. But Mr. Murry approaches his subject not as a historical investigator but as a mystic or an intuitionist, conscious of having newly "understood" Jesus by ignoring all those difficulties of exegesis

which have driven so many would-be biographers to painful straits. For him the concept of Jesus is an aspect of his concept of God. It is the more interesting to find that, like the intuitionists of the early Church, he is moved to dismiss the orthodox conception of Judas.

The curious result is that, refining upon the exegesis of Dr. Schweitzer, from whom he apparently has derived his impulse, Mr. Murry makes Jesus arrange his own tragedy in a new sense, employing Judas not in the callous fashion of the gospel story but sympathetically and with the sympathy of Judas. Renan made the raising of Lazarus a matter of skilful deception; Mr. Murry gives that character to the Betrayal and its sequel, positing "a secret understanding between Jesus and Judas," in which theory he finds "nothing whatever shocking." And thus is Judas newly vindicated :—

"His memory has been blotted out. Even by the believers in the God-man the name of Judas should have been revered as the name of the man by whose hand God's sacrifice was made possible. For a believer in the man-God Judas stands next to Jesus himself in the great story. For he, when all were without understanding, must have understood. Perhaps not all, but something.....The man who betrayed Jesus and hanged himself in sorrow was a man, and perhaps more a man than the disciples who left their master and fled, or than Peter who denied him thrice. From the bare facts of the synoptic story we are forced to conclude an understanding between Jesus and Judas."[1]

The answer to all this, as to the reasoning of

[1] *The Life of Jesus*, 1926, pp. 212–13. "I confess," writes Mr. Murry (pref., p. 9), "that not a little advanced criticism of the Gospel narrative repels me as a man and irritates me as a critic." It is to be feared that he will find his clerical critics reciprocal on that head. In his later handling (p. 289) he falters, as did Renan over *his* theory of the Lazarus story, and puts a "perhaps."

the Cainites, is not to be found in any new exercise of poetic hypothetics over the possible psychology of Jesus and Judas. Authors capable of framing a psychology of God can frame psychologies *ad libitum* for any imagined character, from Adam to Hamlet. For men whose sense of reality is based upon tested knowledge and a perception of the procedure required for the testing of all knowledge, the only rational course is to scrutinize the narratives in question as they scrutinize all other problems. The result will be found to be a discovery that the problem in question is merely fictitious.

II.—The Critical Problem

The early suggestions of the Cainites were not lost on the rationalizing German theologians of a hundred years ago. The once famous Paulus, who produced a Life of Jesus in 1828, and whose forte was the substitution of prosaic and credible for incredible narratives at all points in the gospels, saw Judas as seeking to attain a good end by evil means. Neander explicitly represented him as arguing that if Jesus were the Messiah he would repel arrest by calling up legions of angels to rescue him ; while, if he were not the Messiah, he deserved death. In England, Archbishop Whately favoured the first part of the hypothesis, which had long before been put by Daniel Whitby, a commentator of the reign of William and Mary, who in turn cited Theophylact (11th c.) as ascribing it to certain of the Fathers.[1] De Quincey zealously

[1] Whately's *Lectures on the Characters of Our Lord's Apostles, By a Country Parson* (1851), p. 102. Whately adds that "the best Commentators have supposed" that Judas aimed at forcing Jesus

adopted and developed it,[1] declaring that the action of Judas was taken in the confident hope that Jesus would be forced to declare himself the Messiah, whereupon the people of Jerusalem would rally to him, and so throw off the Roman yoke. That attractive view of the problem is substantially embodied by Mr. Phillpotts in his vivid and rhythmic verse, which has much of the spirit and energy of Browning, and a music of its own.

The professional theologians, especially in England, have naturally been slow to respond hitherto to such suggestions, especially since Milman took up the question on the German promptings and the English speculation they aroused. It is told of Carlyle that he was immensely entertained by a phrase of Milman concerning "the extraordinary conduct of Judas Iscariot." When we read the passage in Milman we begin to realize how in that age the new spirit of historical criticism, begotten on the French side by Voltaire and on the English side by Gibbon, adjusted itself to some of its problems; and how, on the other hand, a temperament like Carlyle's reacted against reasoning in such matters.

Milman is writing in his immature 'History of Christianity,' which dates 1840, and is composed in the moribund academic prose of that period:—

"Much ingenuity has been displayed by some recent writers in attempting to palliate, or rather to account for, this extraordinary conduct of Judas;[2] but the language in which Jesus

to use his supernatural powers. But he accepts the account of Judas given in John, and argues that Judas could make more money by "his system of peculation" than he got by the reward.

[1] *Works*, ed. 1863, vol. vi, essay on Judas Iscariot. De Quincey cites Jeremy Taylor as holding his view.

[2] A modern commentator on Mark repeats the "extraordinary." Cited in Montefiore, *The Synoptic Gospels*, 2nd ed., i, 347.

spake of the crime appears to confirm the common opinion of its enormity. It has been suggested, either that Judas might expect Jesus to put forth his power, even after his apprehension, to elude or to escape from his enemies, and thus his avarice might calculate on securing the reward without being an accomplice in absolute murder, at once betraying his Master and defrauding his employers.

"According to others, still higher motives may have mingled with his love of gain: he may have supposed that, by thus involving Jesus in difficulties otherwise inextricable, he would leave him only the alternative of declaring himself openly and authoritatively to be the Messiah, and so force him to the tardy accomplishment of the ambitious visions of his partisans.

"It is possible that the traitor may not have contemplated, or may not have permitted himself clearly to contemplate, the ultimate consequences of his crime: he may have indulged the vague hope that if Jesus were really the Messiah, he bore, if we may venture the expression, 'a charmed life,' and was safe in his inherent immortality (a notion in all likelihood inseparable from that of the Deliverer) from the malice of his enemies. If it were not, the crime of the betrayal would not be of very great importance. There were other motives which would concur with the avarice of Judas....."[1]

And so forth. The historian, officially committed to the conception that a man could "betray" the Omnipotence which at the same time was betraying *him*, dallies cautiously with the new "liberal" attempts to rationalize dogmatic Christian history, but is careful to take up no clear position. Judas is left very much as he was in the tradition, an evil person, covetous, vindictive, unable to venerate "the exquisite perfection of a character so opposite to his own," and not even to be regarded as sincere in his remorse, that being rather a sense of the odium he had incurred than a repentance for what he had done.

Yet Milman was for his illiberal time a "liberal"; and his discussion of the new speculations, deriving from Germany, as to human motivation in the

[1] Work cited, bk. i, chap. vii (Paris ed. 1840), p. 173.

gospel history, counted for as much in the intellectual life of early Victorian England as did his presentment of Abraham, in his 'History of the Jews,' as "an Arab Sheikh." And if we sum up that his liberalism and his historical criticism did not go very far, we are compelled in justice to confess that the official or professional historico-religious criticism of to-day, after nearly a hundred years, has not got much further.

Milman's stimulus, indeed, was little responded to by English scholarship, which even in the next age spent itself rather in the new documentary analysis of the Old Testament than in any radical treatment of the vital problems of belief involved. On a comparatively bold scrutiny of Old Testament literature followed a mere text-revising scrutiny of the New; and the kind of inquiry into Christian origins which should have ensued has been mainly left to foreign hands.

It is true that the orthodox clerical attitude to the Christian creed has, since Renan, been tacitly directed more or less to the Neo-Unitarian end of proving that the Gospel Jesus was a historical human being—a heresy that has become virtual orthodoxy. But the pursuit of that end has been relatively as unscientific as was the orthodoxy of the past. As early as 1857, the Zürich Professor Gustav Volkmar had crisply stated the essential incredibility of the story of the Betrayal; and 'G. R.,' the author of a rather turgid work entitled 'Gospel Paganism: or, Reason's Revolt against the Revealed,' had in 1864 taken up the theme (p. 104); which Thomas Scott handled afresh in his 'English Life of Jesus,' 1866 (re-written in 1871). Again it was independently discussed by Derenbourg in his 'Essai

sur l'histoire et la géographie de Palestine,' in 1867 (note ix); and it was developed on Volkmar's lines in the anonymous work, 'The Four Gospels as Historical Documents' (1895), an expansion of Scott's 'English Life of Jesus' believed to be the work of Sir George W. Cox.

By this time the sheer incredibility of the gospel story had so impressed itself on the more critical spirits in the Church that Keim's avowal, in his monumental Life of Jesus (1863), of a wish that the narrative could be dismissed as unhistorical, found sympathizers among readers of the English translation; and in the 'Encyclopædia Biblica' (1899–1903) Professor Cheyne, who had become convinced of its mythical nature, and had further realized the non-historicity of the Twelve Apostles, courageously and definitely treated it as unhistorical. Yet again, in 1901, Mr. P. C. Sense, in his 'Historical Inquiry into the Origin of the Third Gospel' (p. 382), avowed his disbelief in its historicity, pointing out that there is no allusion to Judas in any orthodox writer prior to Irenæus; and recently, in the *Hibbert Journal* (April, 1925), Dr. Jacks has declared it to be at once "inexplicable" and unnecessary, remarking, after Wrede, on the unnaturalness of the passivity of the eleven. In Germany half-a-dozen writers have gone further. And still the mass of the professional scholars, in England and elsewhere, make no avowal of doubt.

Thus the Judas story is being approached by many in our "emancipated" age very much as it was approached in the England of 1837; and the professional scholars, preoccupied with the task of repelling the myth theory in general, have dived no deeper than Milman into the particular problem

which was thrust upon him by the German speculation of his time.

It is not necessary to dwell long on the theological side of the discussion—the recurring debate as to how Judas can fitly be treated as an infamous traitor when, on the face of the gospel story, he is the foreordained minister of the scheme of salvation. Without his action, theologically speaking, the divine sacrifice would not have been accomplished; how then could he be decently doomed not only to eternal obloquy but to eternal punishment when the cowardly treachery of Peter went unpunished? Judas carried his remorse, according to one of the two scriptural accounts of his end, to the length of suicide; and the German Von Hase argued that his remorse proved his original nobility of character. Peter shows no lasting sense of shame in the records.

An uneasy consciousness of the dilemma presumably underlies the folk-myth, embodied in Arnold's 'Saint Brandan,' which represents Judas as being released from hell on one day in every year; and some good pietists have gone further. Anatole France, in 'Le Jardin d'Epicure,' tells of a good Abbé, Oegger, the "most amiable of the Cainites," who devoutly hoped and prayed for the pardon of Judas. And indeed it must be difficult for the humane pietist to reconcile the treatment of Judas with that of the penitent thief, especially in view of the rules laid down in the Sermon on the Mount for patient remonstrance with and dissuasion of wrongdoers.

The theological dilemma of orthodox faith on the subject is indeed a trying one, and has probably been the source of as much unbelief as any other item in the sacred books. There are still minds

which convulsively adhere to the time-honoured doctrine that the Divine Potter is entitled in the nature of things to make vessels of dishonour at his will, foreordaining their sins from all eternity, and punishing them *to* all eternity in due sequence; but these zealots are increasingly outnumbered by the minds which decide that if a religious system reduces life to a moral farce the system had better go. That frightful gospel saying,

> The Son of man goeth, even as it is written of him; but woe unto that man through whom the Son of man is betrayed: good were it for that man if he had not been born,

is no longer acceptable to thinking men, even be they mystics.

Hence alike the pious pleadings of the Abbé Oegger (who later became a Swedenborgian) and the humane efforts of the Neanders, the Whatelys, and the De Quinceys to frame a character of Judas which shall put him in the category of pardonable sinners, discreetly leaving alone the question whether the salvation of the human race is really to be supposed to have turned on the accident of a betrayal which, in the terms of the case, was to human eyes wholly unnecessary for the purpose of bringing about a tragedy foreseen and accepted in advance by the victim.

But the rationalizing of irrational creeds is, to say the least, a trying task, and ardent spirits are to be found who will allow of "no nonsense" about Judas Iscariot. In the early 'nineties the then Bishop of Ripon demurred to what a certain journalist indignantly described as "the modern passion for whitewashing the infamous."[1] For the

[1] It can hardly have been on that inspiration that Burns penned his characteristic account of Judas as much inferior in perfidy to

bishop Judas was "a type of the man without principles." As he justly pointed out, Judas had had his warning, though the bishop could not conceive that Judas could have "destroyed his own post as treasurer" of the group for the mere reward of thirty shekels. The late Professor Fairbairn, on the other hand, took the adjusted view that Judas was a disappointed man who sought his revenge.

The fervid journalist just cited, who, I think, was the late Andrew Lang, was not unwilling to adopt an explanation that left Judas duly condemned as a foul traitor. That was what *he* was mainly concerned about. A bad man, he unanswerably argued, is a bad man, and the sole records we possess concerning Judas represent him as all that. It is most true. But the zealous moralist, who was wont to speak of Jesus as "Our Lord," failed to realize, in his zeal, that he was still leaving his co-believers in a dilemma which had been acknowledged by serious theologians, among them the German Keim, who had to write for more reflective readers than those appealed to by the journalist. And, what is worse, the Bishop of Ripon, who ought to have known better, had evaded that dilemma likewise.

Jesus is to be regarded by those who believe in his historic existence either, in terms of the historic faith, as a supernatural person, a God Incarnate, or, in terms of the Neo-Unitarian view which is now becoming orthodox, as an abnormally gifted

Queen Elizabeth: "A sad dog to be sure, but still his demerits sink to insignificance compared with the doings of the infernal Bess Tudor. Judas did not know, at least was by no means sure, what and who that Master was; his turpitude was simply betraying a worthy man who had ever been a good Master to him, a degree of turpitude which has even been outdone by many of his kind since." Letter to Dr. Moore, February 28, 1791.

man and teacher. And on either view he is to be regarded, if we follow the Bishop of Ripon and Mr. Lang, as having chosen among his twelve apostles "a type of the man without principles." Renan, the effective founder of Neo-Unitarianism, accepts that situation. And the common assumption appears to be that such a mischance could happen to the abnormally gifted Teacher as to any other man.

The heathen critic Celsus, however, started an enduring difficulty when he taunted the early Christians, somewhere about 200 A.C., with the fact that their Lord had not had sagacity enough to discern a villain in his own immediate following, as any brigand chief would. And, while the average good Christian is prepared at this point to fall back on the doctrine of the Divine Potter who creates and uses vessels of dishonour for his own high purposes, the more scrupulous theologians, with Keim, recognize a difficulty which they would be glad to get out of.

For the Neo-Unitarian school seeks of necessity to frame an intelligible Jesus, however unmanageable the task may be. On the old orthodox view, Jesus saw into all men's hearts, and must have known the character of Judas. Nay, by his divine foreknowledge he was aware that Judas would actually betray him, and he chose him with that knowledge. For the Neo-Unitarian school that view of things has become offensive and impossible. They must have a Superman who, however much he has been made to play the God, remains a man through and through, and is not merely human for theological purposes when he is facing his foreknown doom.

The God who quailed at the prospect of fulfilling

"His" Father's and "His" own eternal purpose is a troublesome enough conception even for the orthodox theologian. For the Neo-Unitarian it is a chimera. His Jesus *must* be a human reformer, or an idealist, who had *not* planned his own sacrifice. For him, then, the historical Jesus *cannot* have said those things about his necessarily dying "as it was written"; the declaration that he *must* be betrayed; and that it had been better for the fore-ordained betrayer if he had never been born. These things, for the biographical school, *must* be fictions of the gospel-makers. And yet it is to the gospel-makers that they must look for any knowledge of their Jesus!

III.—The Messianic Mystery

What kind of man, then, do we find as a result of the biographical method which merely deletes the supernaturalist element from the gospels? What, in particular, is his relation to Judas? Concerning that personage we get no preliminary detail. He is merely one of the twelve whom Jesus suddenly "called unto him"[1] from an unspecified number of disciples on the mountain top, according to Mark and Luke; and "Judas Iscariot, who *also* betrayed him," is one of the twelve whom Jesus sends forth to preach the gospel, with power to doom unbelieving cities to a worse fate than that of Sodom and Gomorrah—an aspect of the matter which does not appear to impinge on the average Christian consciousness.

No light is cast on the man's character in the

[1] In Matt. x, 1, the twelve are suddenly introduced. In Mk. iii, 13, the twelve are "called"; so in Lk. vi, 13.

synoptics. It is in the admittedly factitious and fictitious fourth gospel (vi, 67–71) that Jesus, after "many" of his general disciples have abandoned him, first asks the twelve: "Would ye also go away?" and adds, upon Peter's protest: "Did not I choose you the twelve, and one of you is a devil? Now he spake of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for it was he that should betray him, *one of the twelve.*" Here we have that largely different mental atmosphere which long ago forced critical readers to set aside the fourth gospel as utterly incompatible with the synoptics where it thus diverges from them. When, then, that gospel further announces (xii, 6) that Judas grudged the costly spikenard on a hypocritical pretence, "because he was a thief, and having the bag took away what was put therein"; and again records (xiii, 29) that Jesus actually commissioned this thief and hypocrite to "buy what things we have need of for the feast," the biographical school tacitly or avowedly sets the testimony aside as a late invention. If these things were true, how came it that the earlier gospel-makers knew nothing of them?

But what is now left as ostensible matter of record in regard to Judas? Simply that, after having taught him and empowered him with the others, Jesus suddenly divines, in the climax, that Judas is going to betray him, and, making no attempt to sway or enlighten the wretch, allows him to proceed. Concerning Peter, on the other hand, the third gospel, and that only (xxii, 31), tells us that Jesus said: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have you that he might sift you as wheat; but I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not; and do thou, when once thou hast

turned again, stablish thy brethren." But Judas, on the biographical view, is deliberately and mercilessly allowed to go to his doom; and this by the Teacher who had inculcated brotherly forbearance and long-continued pleading with the sinner among the brethren, and laid it down that all sins are on an equality in the eye of God.

Why? Here it is that the Neo-Unitarians yearn for the kind of solution offered first by the more amiable Cainites, and latterly developed by Neander and Whately and De Quincey, and finely poetized by Mr. Phillpotts. Jesus, they would fain think, realized that Judas dreamed a vain dream, and, not heartlessly but resignedly, left him to "dree his weird." But the fatal records, which are always crumbling under their feet, give them here no support. Synoptics and fourth gospel broadly concur in representing Jesus as reckoning Judas an evil soul, in the power of Satan. Cut out all the fatalistic references to prophecy, and that conception is still the only one offered. Is it, then, plausibly to be claimed that we can fitly delete *all* details from the records, and proceed to make our own guesses as to the nature of an episode *which those records alone give us any reason for supposing to have taken place?* Is the æsthetic method of the poets and the novelists to be tacitly adopted as the method of history, and fiction to be propounded as fact?

Dr. Arno Neumann, one of those zealous modernists who are quite sure that "something of the kind happened," and are confident of being able to write a spiritual biography of Jesus, takes the Judas difficulty in his stride. As thus[1]:—

[1] *Jesus*, Eng. trans.; 1906, p. 152.

"Fate now willed that one of Jesus' most trusted followers should become his Master's betrayer, Judas of Kerioth. By his crime against the purest and greatest of any who have ever appeared on the stage of history this man has become for us the type of the basest kind of sinner, and the hire and kiss of Judas have become proverbial. In the Creed of the Church the traitor became, as it were, the living embodiment of Satan in the tragedy of the earthly sojourn of the Son of God. For the historical inquirer, however, whose first and chief aim is to understand and depict his character, the renegade disciple is a perplexing figure.

"*It is very probable* that at heart Judas was never a thorough disciple; that, a Jew by birth, he joined Jesus' disciples only at a somewhat late stage; that Jesus' growing hostility to the religion of the fathers estranged him; and that, like the great majority of the people, he held with tenacity to the notion that the Messiah was bound to free his country from the rule of Rome. The hot-blooded realist in Judas came to be disillusioned by Jesus.

"Our sources give us no satisfactory account of the reasons for his apostasy, for we cannot believe that he was impelled, as is mostly suggested (John xii, 4–6), by mere lust of money. .....If Judas was a covetous man, we must ask what it was that could have led him to join the poor wandering preacher, and *what interest could the Master have taken in him?* The only answer to both questions is to be found in his Messianic enthusiasm.

"It would seem, indeed, as if *the keen-sighted Nazarene* had become conscious of a change in his manner during the last days; perhaps because Jesus' eyes had been made specially watchful by His anxiety for His own safety....."

Here, it would seem, even the confident biographer must fear that his glowing narrative is too thin-spun to yield any satisfying conception. His guess that Judas joined the group "at a somewhat late stage" is sheer fabrication in the face of the plain record and the fact that the total ministry ostensibly lasts for little more than a year. In an earlier chapter (p. 89) he had told us that "A quick insight into character, and good fortune as well, must have co-operated to help Him in this task [of choosing his twelve disciples]; for he seems

to have been deceived only in one disciple, Judas of Kerioth." "Only in one"! Thus do the biography-framers play with their material. Again and again do the synoptics indicate that Jesus found all, or nearly all, of his disciples impercipient, unteachable, self-seeking.

Of course, there are other passages where he tells them (Mt. xiii, 16) they are the blessed hearers of things which many prophets and righteous men had desired vainly to know. That is part of the insoluble confusion of the gospels. But when a professed modernist, choosing what he will believe and rejecting what he will not, assures us that the "keen-sighted Nazarene" had a "quick insight into character," and yet was also lucky in that he picked *only one* villain and predestinate traitor in twelve, we become conscious that the infirmity of judgment and the speculative ignorance which went to the compilation of the gospel narratives have not disappeared from the procedure of the confident guessers who undertake to find the truth for us in that tangled web of fantasy and contradiction.

Dr. Neumann, despite his inference that the "keen-sighted Nazarene had become conscious of a change" in the manner of Judas, feels driven to reject as incredible the exact prediction of his treachery by the Master. "It is *certain*," the biographer assures us, "that Judas had to dissemble down to the last moment, and also *had to keep himself apprised of all the places where the Master proposed to spend the night;* for the task he had undertaken was to lead the band of capturers, *without any stir*, to Jesus (Acts i, 16). His kiss also—the kiss of the scholar on the hand of the teacher—was rendered necessary by the darkness

as a sign by which others could recognize Him." And then, finally, we have this lame and impotent conclusion : "Jesus at first, *doubtless*, thought the intention was innocent (against Luke xxii, 48)." That is to say, the keen-sighted Nazarene, who has been described to us as dreading "His" risk of death as a result of "His" proceedings, did not even at the moment of the kiss of betrayal realize that he had been betrayed.

From such nugatory guess-work as this one turns, not indeed sanguinely, but with at least a hope for more circumspect procedure, to the new Life entitled 'Jesus of Nazareth,' by Dr. Joseph Klausner of Jerusalem. That scholar is in the habit of censuring for their unscholarlike and unscientific procedure many of the "Christian" specialists of the day, and sees "uncritical belief" at work among the orthodox. It might have been supposed that his pro-Jewish bias would have made him alert to an unhistorical atmosphere where the Christian-minded biographers remain absorbed by their à priori design of extracting history from their documents. But Dr. Klausner's method is just theirs, with a Jewish instead of a Christian colouring. He has no doubts about Judas ; he is, in fact, sure that he knows all about him :—

"Judas came to Jesus from a distant part of the country (Kerioth in Judea), a proof that he was an exceptional man and attracted strongly by the new teaching. *This alone persuaded Jesus* to receive him as one of his most intimate Apostle-disciples ; not till the very last did Jesus recognize in him the base character which made him a traitor.[1]....."

"Gradually his enthusiasm cooled, and he began to look

[1] *Jesus of Nazareth : His Life, Times, and Teaching*, by Joseph Klausner, Ph.D. (Heidelberg) : Jerusalem, Eng. tr.; ed. 1927, p. 285.

askance at his master's words and deeds. He was generally convinced that Jesus was not always successful in healing the sick; that Jesus feared his enemies, and sought to escape and evade them; that there were marked contradictions in Jesus' teaching.....

"What was more, this 'Messiah" neither would nor could deliver his nation, yet he arrogated to himself the rôle of 'The Son of Man coming with the clouds of Heaven,' asserting that he should sit at the right hand of God in the Day of Judgment, daring to say of the Temple, the most sacred place in the world, that not one stone should remain upon another, and, actually, that he would destroy it and in its place raise up another after three days!

"Judas Iscariot became convinced that here was a false Messiah or a false prophet, erring and making to err, a beguiler and one who led astray, one whom the Law commanded to be killed, one to whom the Law forbade pity or compassion or forgiveness.....After [the] revelation to the disciples at Cæsarea, and to the entire people at Jerusalem, Judas expected that in the Holy City.....Jesus would..... destroy the Romans and bring the Pharisees and Sadducees to naught; then all would acknowledge his messianic claims, and all would see him in his pomp and majesty as the 'final saviour.'

"But what, in fact, did Judas see? No miracles (Matthew alone tells how Jesus healed the blind and lame in the Temple, matters unknown to Mark); no mighty deeds; no one is subdued by him; the mighty Messiah escapes nightly to Bethany; except for 'bold' remarks against the tradition of the elders, and vain arrogance, Jesus reveals no plan by which he will effect the redemption. Was it not, then, a 'religious duty' to deliver up such a 'deceiver' to the government and so fulfil the law: Thou shalt exterminate the evil from thy midst? (Deut. xiii, 2–12).

"This *must* have been Judas Iscariot's train of reasoning." Avarice "*could not have been* the psychological cause for his action; rather was it the desperation which Judas endured because of his very proximity to Jesus and his knowledge of the human frailties of Jesus.

"Judas was an educated Judean with a keen intellect but a cold and calculating heart, accustomed to criticize and scrutinize; his knowledge of the frailties blinded him to the many virtues of Jesus, which at first had so impressed him and aroused his enthusiasm. It was otherwise with the other disciples, all alike uneducated Galileans, dull of intellect but warm-hearted; for them the virtues covered up all the

defects, and till the hour of danger they remained faithful to their master, and when the short interval of doubt was past they returned to his holy memory and so cherished the knowledge of his words and deeds that they survive to this day."[1]

Thus is the docile reader kept standing at a point of view reached a century ago, only with a pro-Jewish instead of a pro-Christian treatment. By Dr. Klausner's own account, Judas was justified in "betraying" his Master; but he so far accommodates himself to Christian sentiment as to pronounce Judas "base," and also "cold and calculating"—this last in the same breath with an account of him as having been aroused to "enthusiasm" by the "many virtues of Jesus." These and other details, wholly hypothetical save for the use made of the fourth gospel, which elsewhere he treats as quite untrustworthy, the Jewish critic posits unreservedly as historical facts. And without a sign of misgiving he implicitly ascribes to the "uneducated Galileans" the preservation of the whole body of Jesuine doctrine in the gospels.

He has simply turned the story to Jewish account, inventing as the occasion requires. Insisting on the historicity of the narrative as a whole, he unreservedly affirms that in the story of the arrest "the gospels give many supplementary details, few of which are true." This of the sole sources for his narrative. But the Christian biographer is not a whit more critically scrupulous in his equally free manipulation of the documents; and when the confident modernist has conducted us to an *impasse* of self-contradiction by way of eluding the self-contradictions of his records, we shall perhaps have some even of the faithful with us in calling

[1] *Id.* pp. 324–6.

for a reopening of the case on something like judicial lines.

For every one who cherishes a fair ideal of a Super-Teacher has a ground of grievance against an expositor who tells them, as does Dr. Neumann (p. 135), that Jesus really did carry through the violent and disorderly proceeding of driving the money-changers out of the Temple, and (p. 153) that afterwards his eyes were made "watchful by His anxiety for *His own safety*." If we are to pick and choose our texts and frame our guesses at will, the idealist may well say: "Let us have a figure who when he defies the ruling powers knows what he is doing and is prepared to take the consequences. Let us have something like a Superman, not a blend of heroism and dread, Messianic possession and timid calculation. Let us not be told that when Jesus asks the high-priests why they come to take him like a thief in the night he was actually hiding in terror, trusting to their fear of arresting him in the daytime. Let us not be left with a collapsed Superman in place of a collapsed Deity."

The obliging biographer may perhaps reply that the idealists will have to take what they can get; that, having given up the unacceptable God, who fore-ordains a treason and damns the traitor, they will have to come down to practicalities and plausibilities, even to the extent of stripping the Teacher of the attributes of consistency and calm courage, making him a visionary expectant of supernatural aid, and losing heart when he finds it lacking. But when it comes to such a substitution of hypotheses for a narrative which is at once discredited by rejection and founded on as a valid historical proof of a personality, at least the inquirer who is concerned first and last for historical truth must

take another path and another method; and perhaps the disillusioned ex-believer may see fit, for the time being, to follow him.

IV.—The Betrayal Mystery

Re-opening the inquiry, then, in the spirit of historical science, let us ask concerning the betrayal story, in the words of Volkmar, *What was there to betray?* According to the narrative, Jesus had been for days the most prominent figure in Jerusalem. He had made a triumphal entry; he had been teaching daily in the Temple; he had made a violent commotion there by expelling the money-changers—an episode which has been naïvely explained as a deed done in the interest of devout Jewish worshippers who were habitually defrauded by the money-changers. That the Jewish authorities should wish to imprison and punish such a high-handed disturber of the peace is readily conceivable—provided we can believe that one man with a whip of small cords could thus, as it were, upset the Bank of England. Origen, the most intelligent of the early Fathers, felt forced to regard it as a miracle.

We are told, however, that the priestly authorities feared to arrest Jesus openly because of the friendly populace—this in face of the further record that on the day after the arrest that very populace were shouting "Crucify him," and demanding the release of the robber Barabbas in preference to the Son of David. The priests, then, were able to turn the populace as they would.

Waiving that point, nevertheless, let us assume that two days before the capture the chief priests

and the elders planned how they "might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him.....not during the feast, lest a tumult arise among the people." What then are we to make of the narrative that on the night of the arrest there went with Judas "a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people"? Was a tumult by night, then, a matter of indifference? The resourceful biographer, Dr. Neumann, actually tells us that Judas had to lead the band of capturers "without any stir." And the outcome is "a great multitude, with swords and staves"! Thus can history and biography be written.

But all these queries are capped by the crowning one, Why should the authorities have either invited or accepted the leadership of Judas in the matter? Jesus, by his own alleged declaration in all three synoptics, taught openly in the Temple; then he openly left the Temple and went (Lk. xxi, 37) *with his followers* every evening to the Mount of Olives. What possible difficulty could the authorities find in having him traced? A child could have done the tracking. Dr. Neumann, wisely ignoring such questions, assures us that not only had Judas to lead the multitude by means of his special knowledge, but he had to give the traitor kiss—"on the hand," an old guess for which there is no documentary warrant—because "in the darkness" the others could not recognize Jesus. Now we are asked to believe that the midnight multitude had gone through lightless Jerusalem to the lightless mountain *without* the torches and lanterns which in the fourth gospel are taken for granted! If, then, the night was thus unlitten, how could they possibly see Judas giving the kiss when they could not see Jesus for themselves?

All the while, according to the very gospels which describe Judas as coming with the multitude, Judas had been with the other disciples not only throughout the Last Supper but on the walk to the Mount of Olives, which, we are told, was Jesus' "custom." Only in the fourth gospel are we told that Judas had "gone out" after receiving the sop. The synoptics all tell that "the disciples" partook of the meal and went with Jesus to the Mount of Olives; and Matthew (xxvi, 35) expressly asserts that "*all* the apostles" joined in Peter's protestation of devotion on the Mount of Olives before they passed to Gethsemane. At no point do they tell of the departure of Judas. And thus we are forced to note, what the biographical school, down to Abbé Loisy and Dr. Joseph Klausner of Jerusalem, have so strangely failed to see, that the story of the betrayal is a documentary interpolation in the synoptics—an *addition* to a narrative in which originally *the betrayal did not figure.*

So much might have been strictly inferred from the fact that in the third gospel (xxii, 30), as it stands, the Lord is actually made to promise to the Twelve, including Judas, "Ye shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel," *after* we have been told that Satan had entered into Judas and the plot of betrayal made. The original compiler could not possibly have planned so to stultify the Lord and himself. In Matthew (xix, 28) the same promise is made before the journey to Jerusalem; but neither could that evangelist conceivably have penned such a prediction had he intended to relate its falsification through the treason and perdition of Judas. The promise can have been current only in an age before there was

a Betrayal story.[1] That consideration alone should dictate our conclusion. But we shall find that every critical datum in the case involves the same decision.

The counter-argument of Dr. Eduard Meyer[2]—that the story of the Betrayal must be historical because the evangelist would never have invented an episode so injurious to the prestige of the apostles—is typical of the dialectic of presupposition. We shall find that all the external evidence runs counter to that presupposition, and also that it is framed in disregard even of the à priori probabilities. Dr. Meyer, whose own exegesis constantly involves the admission of interpolations, here argues as if the entire text of any gospel must come from one hand. As all interpolations must have been motived in some way, we have only to ask whether a Christian faction could have a motive for discrediting the apostolate in order to realize that the à priori negative is illicit.

The motive lies on the face of the conflict between the Judaizing and the Gentilizing factions of which we have the plain traces in the Acts and in the Pauline Epistles. To discredit the Jewish apostolate was the natural and, indeed, inevitable

[1] In the whole mass of the Apocryphal Gospels and Acts, I think, apart from the 'Gospel of the Twelve Apostles,' there is only one narrative concerning Judas Iscariot, that given in the 'Narrative of Joseph of Arimathea,' and there he is described as "not a disciple before the face of Jesus" but a pretended follower who contrives to get Jesus arrested for a robbery of the temple committed by the "good thief" Demas, who died with Jesus on the cross. Judas, further, is described as "[son] of the brother of Caiaphas, the priest." Of the Twelve there is no mention.

[2] Who follows Heitmüller, art. on Judas in *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 1912, iii, 795. Prof. Rudolf Bultmann, on the contrary, sees in the Betrayal story little but legend. *Die Geschichte der Synopt. Tradition*, 1921, p. 159.

tactic of the Gentilizing movement so long as the traditional claims of the earlier Judaic body were pressed, and that there was such a strife can be least of all disputed by Dr. Meyer. For who could have invented such a comprehensive tale of unseemly division in the Christian Church if it had not taken place? Nobody could gain or hope to gain by inventing *that*.

It was the spontaneous expression of a strife of interests comparable to the strifes of tribes, nations, classes; and the result was new fiction on a moral par with the initial fictions of the faith. The author of the 'Epistle of Barnabas,' an anti-Semite proselyte writing about 140 A.C. (but regarded by all the ancient Fathers as *the* Barnabas of the Acts), speaks (c. 5) of the Apostles, whom he neither numbers nor names, as "lawless beyond all lawlessness," and chosen by the Christ *as such* "that he might show he came 'not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.'" Such an attitude not only permitted but dictated, in the now greatly preponderant Gentile branch of the Christist movement, detailed charges of evil-doing against apostles by name, and we shall see how the influence operated on the gospel texts.

The fact that only in the fifth and at the end of the preceding chapter does 'Barnabas' quote from the gospels, all his other Scriptural quotations being from the Septuagint, may be held to raise the question whether there has not here been an interpolation. But any such inference only extends the time-area of the sectional strife. Whether it was the author or a redactor who penned the sweeping aspersion on the apostles, carefully colouring it by a doctrinary explanation which leaves the faith in the lurch, it is an irreducible

testimony to the Hellenistic procedure as against the Judaizers.

V.—The Textual Fabrication

§ 1. *External Evidence*

Before studying the documentary grounds for this conclusion, let us note the negative grounds for it.

Outside the Four Gospels.—In the first place, the recovered fragment of the so-called 'Gospel of Peter' expressly speaks of "We, the *twelve* apostles," mourning together *after* the capture and execution of Jesus, with no hint of any betrayal; and no scholar dates that document within the first century. In the second place, not only is there no mention of Judas as betrayer in any of the Epistles, but even the plainly interpolated passage in First Corinthians (xi, 23), in which we have the phrase, "the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was delivered up," without any naming of the betrayer, is balanced in that regard by the later chapter (xv, 5–8) in which Paul is made to assert, with the same revealing formula of introduction, that Jesus after rising from the dead appeared to "the twelve"; then again to "all the apostles." In the third place, the picture in the Apocalypse (xxi, 14) of the reign of the Twelve recognizes no breach in the foundation of Twelve Apostles.

In the fourth place, the recovered Apology of Aristides (found in 1889 by Mr. J. Rendel Harris, in a Syriac version, in the Sinaitic convent of St. Catherine) speaks of the Twelve Apostles in terms which negate the possibility that he had heard of Judas as a traitor. Professing to found on "that

Gospel which a little while ago was spoken among them [the Christians] as being preached," Aristides near his outset writes that Jesus "had twelve disciples, in order that a certain dispensation of his might be fulfilled"; that he was "pierced by the Jews," died, and was buried; adding: "and they say that after three days he rose and ascended to heaven; and then *these twelve* disciples went forth into the known parts of the world and taught concerning his greatness....."

The Apology of Aristides is addressed to "Cæsar Titus Hadrianus Antoninus Augustus Pius"—that is, either to Hadrian or his successor Marcus Antoninus, who adoptively bore Hadrian's name; and as Eusebius (iv, iii) speaks of Aristides as having, "like Quadratus," addressed an apology to Hadrian, the presumption is that it was to the emperor commonly so named. The document is accordingly to be dated between the years 117 and 138. It is unnecessary to inquire whether it may belong to the next reign: if the story was absent from a gospel circulating about 120–135, it must be classed as a late invention, from any standpoint.

It might perhaps be argued that an apologist, making only a brief statement as to Christian origins, might naturally refrain from troubling the Emperor with such a detail as the Betrayal story even if he knew it; but on the other hand it is unthinkable that he would expressly say that "*these* twelve disciples" preached the gospel after the Resurrection if he knew that one of them was recorded to have betrayed his Lord. The only warrantable inference is that when Aristides wrote, the Christians had no Betrayal story.

In the fifth place, even the Syriac version of the so-called 'Gospel of the Twelve Apostles,' a

stratified document worked upon as late as the eighth century,[1] exhibits plain marks of dislocation and manipulation at the points at which it catalogues the Twelve and relates their function. Judas, with the usual parenthesis, "he that betrayed him," is placed last on the list, in which the apostles are assigned to tribes: then there follows the sentence: "These twelve are his disciples to whom he promised twelve thrones that they may judge Israel." Also, the list is preceded by the sentence: "And he chose him *true* disciples and twelve apostles.....whose names are as follows."

And still further the primary structure reveals itself, for, after a paragraph ending with an allusion to the "holy gospel of the four truthful evangelists," we are told that the Lord "commanded" the twelve to "evangelize in the four quarters of the world, *and we carried out the preaching*." Only then supervenes a paragraph telling of the betrayal by "one of his disciples, *him that is called Scariota*" —a name *not before given* even in the interpolated parenthesis in the list—the crucifixion, the death of Judas, and the election of Matthias. Even after that, Jesus is made to "appear to the *eleven*"—a revelation that the election of Matthias had been separately superadded to the previous interpolations. The whole series of fabrications is thus plain. The Betrayal story, here as in the canonical gospels, had been thrust into a document that originally lacked it; and still later the Election story had been awkwardly superimposed on that.

In the Epistles.—If there were any room for hesitation here, there would still be none over the

[1] See the careful introduction by J. Rendel Harris to his valuable transcript and translation, 1900.

canonical books. There is only one possible inference as to the passages in First Corinthians: interpolated as they are, they were interpolated at a time when the story of the betrayal by Judas had not yet found currency. The passage in the eleventh chapter is inferably the later interpolation of the two.

But here let us take note that the Greek verb which in our versions is in this connection rendered by "betrayed" means strictly "delivered up." It is the same verb that is rendered by "delivered up" in Mark i, 14, in the account of the arrest of John the Baptist, who is not reputed to have been "betrayed"; and it occurs also in Romans iv, 25, and in Matthew x, 17, 19, where there is no question of betrayal. It may therefore have been used in First Corinthians with no reference to any betrayal story but merely in allusion to a story of capture. Still, an interpolation the passage obviously is, and it may have been a late one; though there is force in Volkmar's suggestion[1] that the ambiguous verb "delivered up" may have given the first cue for the invention of the Judas story.

§ 2. *The Internal Evidence*

For when we return to the synoptics we find there also, at this point, evidences of a process of interpolation, of relatively late date. Let the open-minded reader turn to the 26th chapter of Matthew, verse 21, and note how the passage in which Jesus exhibits his knowledge of the treachery of Judas is introduced by the phrase: "*and as they were eating.*" Now let him go on to verse 26, at the end of

[1] Work cited, p. 261.

that passage, and we again have the phrase "*and as they were eating*," the matter being now the institution of the sacrament. Why is the eating thus specified twice within a few lines, without any narrative necessity? The explanation is fairly clear. The repetition is created by the insertion of verses 21–5, introduced by the same phrase.

Let us turn yet again to the 27th chapter, in which verse 2 tells how "they bound him and led him away, and *delivered him* (παρέδωκαν) *up to Pilate the governor.*" At this point intervenes the paragraph beginning: "*Then* Judas, who delivered him up" (ὁ παραδιδοὺς αὐτὸν), which tells of Judas's remorse and suicide, and the buying of the potter's field, in fulfilment of the prophecy of Jeremiah. After that paragraph verse 11 recommences: "*Now Jesus stood before the Governor.*" Here we have the same procedure as in chapter 26. Something had to be added, but nothing must be taken away.

Exactly as in the case of the introduction of the Judas episode at the supper, we have a double use of the catchword, which reveals the process of interpolation, deliberately gone about. That process is repeated, as regards the supper episode, in the 14th chapter of Mark, where we have the Judas passage introduced with: "And as they reclined *and were eating*"; and after the doom we resume with: "*And as they were eating*, he took bread." In both gospels the Judas item has visibly been added to an already constituted narrative; and as the story of Judas's remorse and suicide is *not* interpolated in Mark or Luke, the inference is that in Matthew it is the latest interpolation of all. The resuming catchwords are our clues.

In Luke the process is different. There the

story of the challenge to Judas is *not* given in the account of the supper. But at the beginning of the chapter we can trace, by catchword, the interpolation of Judas's treason, which, we are now forced to infer, had been either before or after interpolated in similar terms in the first and second gospels. Luke's 22nd chapter begins: "*Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover.* And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might put him to death, for they feared the people." Then come the four verses telling how Satan entered into "Judas who was called Iscariot," and the seventh verse resumes: "*And the day of unleavened bread came on which the Passover must be sacrificed*"—a repetition created, as in the other instances, by the previous paragraph. When this is followed (*v.* 24) by the paragraph in which the foolishly wrangling apostles are told that they shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel, we cannot but infer that, however much *that* passage may have been interpolated, it must have been penned before the stultifying story of the treason of Judas had been inserted. And when we come in the same chapter to the story of Peter's denial, and note how verse 63 reads naturally just after verse 54, with the Peter story left out, the same presumption of interpolation strongly obtrudes itself.

That such repetitions of connective phrases as we have noted are really marks of interpolation the student can perhaps best realize by turning to a particularly obvious insertion in the first gospel (xi, 25–30), beginning: "*At that season* Jesus answered and said, 'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth,'" and ending: "For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." There is

no congruity in the "At that season"; and the latter of the two sections which constitute the passage is still more incongruous with the context. Abbé Loisy, seeking doubtfully to connect both with the return of the missionary disciples, confesses his suspicion that the second is post-Jesuine; and many critics reject the whole. It is really a close parallel to poetic formulas of the pagan mysteries;[1] though also to passages in Jeremiah (vi, 16) and Ecclesiasticus li, 23 *sq.*

But the point that for the moment concerns us is the mode of the interpolation. The next chapter begins exactly as does the interpolation: "*At that season* Jesus went....." The interpolator had to get in his passage somewhere and somehow. As a passage of lyrism, unrelated to any incident, it has no proper place anywhere; but he thinks to save the situation by forcing it in just before the "*At that season*" which begins chapter xii. The simple psychology of the interpolator is satisfied by that measure of adaptation to the environment. If there is no congruity of matter, there may be at least a manufactured congruity of form.[2]

It is not improbable that the repetition of catch-word phrases was held requisite for the purposes of oral learning and recitation; and the cadencial quality of composition which M. Loisy is latterly expounding, as regards the gospels in general, is particularly noticeable in the passage in question. However that may be, the gospels are thickly studded with the marks of cumulative insertion,

[1] See *Christianity and Mythology*, second ed., p. 388. Cp. Montefiore, *The Synoptic Gospels, in loc.*

[2] In the Greek the formal repetition is perhaps more striking:

Ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ καιρῷ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Ἰησοῦς
Ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ καιρῷ ἐπορεύθη ὁ Ἰησοῦς

and in particular we see a process of successive accretions as to Judas and Peter upon a story which in its earlier form told neither of betrayal by Judas nor of denial by Peter. All the incidental allusions to Judas in the earlier chapters of the synoptics as the destined betrayer are mere consequences of the insertion of the story at the climax. Their insertion is obviously retrospective. Judas is described as "one of the twelve" after all the prior insertions. Such phrases as "Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot," and "Then Judas which betrayed him," might alone reveal the procedure. The fact that Luke does *not* insert the story of the remorse and suicide of Judas, and the sequel as to the potter's field, which in Acts also is visibly late, is further confirmative of the inference of the lateness of the insertion in Matthew. Had it been in early currency, Luke would in natural course have given it. And, once more, the astonishing thing is that the biographical school have not seen the obvious traces of a process which it so plainly behoved them to see.

When we find so thoughtful and so candid a scholar as Professor F. C. Burkitt blandly obliterating for himself all those clues with the remark that "Nothing is more characteristic of Matthew's style than his fondness for repeating his own phrases,"[1] we are almost driven to despair of academic vision. As we have seen, the repetition of phrase made by the interpolation concerning Judas at the Supper is *almost exactly the same in Mark as in Matthew*; and in Luke we have a similar repetition of phrase in regard to unleavened bread and the Passover, *for the same kind of*

[1] *Christian Beginnings*, 1924, p. 16.

reason—the necessity of soldering an insertion. What then is to account for the repetition of phrases in Mark and Luke? Dr. Burkitt, like so many of the modernists, leans heavily on the split reed of the priority of Mark. What then can the assumption of the priority of Mark do for him here? Did Matthew find a repetition so congenial that he copied that of Mark? Is it not plain that either the interpolation is such *in both*, or that Mark follows Matthew with the usual verbal differences, yet with the significant repetition?

Again and again, in Matthew, the repetition of phrases should suggest to a vigilant scholar that there has been a tampering with the text. We have noted the case of the passage xi, 25–30. But what of chapter xxii, where we have (*a*) the paragraph (15–22) beginning: "Then *went the Pharisees, and took counsel* how they might ensnare him in his talk," dealing with the tribute to Cæsar; then (*b*) the paragraph (23–33): "*On that day* there came to him the Sadducees," discussing the resurrection; then (*c*) that beginning: "But the Pharisees, when they heard he had put the Sadducees to silence, *gathered themselves together*" to discuss with Jesus "the great commandment"; and finally (*d*) the paragraph (41–46): "Now, while the Pharisees were *gathered together*."

Here the consonance of the "gathered together" is not so exact in the Greek as in the English, but we have in all three paragraphs the words "saying, Master" (*Didaskale*), and the first two end with sentences to the same effect, both beginning Καὶ ἀκούσαντες; and instead of setting down the phenomena to Matthew's fondness for phrase repetition we are led to surmise a process of accretion in which one debate is added to another to establish

the triumphant dialectic of the Lord. Here the difference between Matthew and Mark (xii, 13–37) is that the latter tells of the successive accosts, without the machinery of the "gathering together" of the hostile bodies, reducing a more elaborate to a more natural form of narrative, as he so frequently does.

The error of the modernists, we may here sum up, is that they read with their inner ear rather than with their eyes, on the presupposition that among the ventriloquizing voices of the gospels they can detect the dominical, and simply finding that in those they like best; whereas if they read with vigilant eyes they might detect the different *hands* manipulating the text, making it a marvel of patchwork. And thus they miss detections which might at least partly minister to their own comfort by revealing the factitiousness of some embarrassing matter.

In the present connection we find a different kind of miscarriage befalling Strauss, who so strangely pronounced the Judas story "without doubt historical," after having pointed to some of its distinctly mythical aspects. At neither time was he paying any attention to the structure as distinct from the purport of the gospel records. Hence his miscarriage. It was critically relevant to object to his first 'Life of Jesus' that he pointed out the innumerable discrepancies among the gospels without attempting to trace the process of their composition; though he might reasonably have replied that the two inquiries had better be separately conducted. In his second 'Life' (1864), however, written nearly thirty years after the first, he has still failed to make the due bibliographical scrutiny; and here it is that he expressly

speaks (3te Auflage, p. 283) of the betrayal of Jesus by a false disciple as "without doubt historical."

Volkmar in 1857[1] had shown strong reasons for thinking it unhistorical; and of these reasons Strauss takes note.[2] It is instructive to find that he rejects them not as lacking weight—that he could not and does not say—but because of the hypothesis by which Volkmar explains the insertion of the figment in what he terms "the original gospel." That hypothesis was that the motive was to make an opening for the name of Paul in the list of Twelve by causing one to be struck out —an intention which, Volkmar recognizes, was parried in the Acts of the Apostles by the late figment of the election of Matthias by the Eleven, a story of which the motivation is revealed, in Volkmar's sense, by verses 21 and 22. Now, that is a highly plausible account of the procedure; but inasmuch as Volkmar heedlessly ascribed the invention of the Judas treason to the "original gospel," Strauss argued, justly enough, that at that stage the Paulinist influence could not be strong enough. On this score, however, he rejects the whole argument against the non-historicity of the betrayal story. Yet if Volkmar had but recognized that the fiction is not early but late, Strauss could hardly have refused to admit it.

§ 3. *The Matthias Election*

For the section of Acts i which relates the election of Matthias in place of Judas is in its substance as palpable an interpolation as the Judas

[1] *Die Religion Jesu und ihre erste Entwickelung*, 1857, p. 260 *sq.*
[2] *Leben Jesu* (second), 3rd ed. 1874, pp. 273–4 (§ 43).

stories in the synoptics. The very idea, indeed, of *electing* to the Twelve-group, alleged to have been established by "the Lord," a substitute for one discredited and deceased, is a plain figment, intelligible only as a device in a controversy. There is nowhere any pretence that the number was subsequently kept up when disciples died or, as the tradition goes, were martyred. Why, then, should it be maintained in this fashion in one instance? And, if the gospel story be true, how could disciples pretend to elect any one to fulfil a function created by the Founder?

The story is retrospective myth, telling of a time when, there being notoriously *no* continuing body of Twelve, factions fought over their pretensions to an authority derived from Apostles in the days when, by tradition, there *were* Twelve Judaic Apostles with sacrosanct claims, and the adherents of Gentile Christism were claiming for their remote founder, Paul, a status as high as that accorded to the alleged original apostles. The Book of the Acts of the Apostles is as it were the chief "palimpsest" in which the bibliographical traces of that strife may be followed. Late as is the whole opening narrative of the first chapter, the election story can be seen to be later still, as has been recognized by modern investigators.[1] The

[1] A concise survey of the study of the Acts up to 1895 is given in *Die Quellen der Apostelgeschichte*, by Johannes Jüngst (Gotha, 1895), which makes an important advance on the previous work of Spitta. Later English work seems to have failed to profit by his analysis. As to the secondary nature of the story of the election of Matthias, see his section on "Die Ersatzwahl für Judas," pp. 23–6, and the "Quellenübersicht" at the close. The main criticism to which Jüngst appears to be open is the habit of positing "Quellen" for all differences instead of simply indicating changes of hand. But the scrutiny is close and convincing.

introductory phrase of verse 15, "And in these days Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren and said," with the superadded parenthesis which follows, reveals the procedure. As Jüngst argues, it is probable that the passage from "men" in verse 21 to "from us" in verse 22 is a redaction; but it is still clearer that the parenthesis in verse 15, and the further undisguised parenthesis of verses 18 and 19, are patches *on* the main patch. In the first script ii, 1, had followed immediately upon i, 14.

§ 4. *The Denial by Peter*

Here the first inference forced upon us is that the story of the election of Matthias was framed before that of the Denial of his Lord by Peter. If the latter story were already in the gospels at the time of the insertion of the Matthias story at the beginning of the Acts, the procedure of the traitor Peter arranging for a substitute for the traitor Judas would have been a monstrosity beyond imagination. He of all men, in such a case, should have remained silent. So also with the story of Ananias and Sapphira, condemned to death for a venial falsehood by the man who had denied his Lord with curses (alleged in Matthew and Mark, not in Luke). The story of the Denial, in fine, is the counter-invention on the Gentile side to the Acts story of the election of Matthias. And it may be at the same time a counter-stroke to the ghastly story of the supernatural murder of Ananias and his wife, which in turn may have been a stroke at a Paulinizing Ananias (Acts ix, 10), who may have figured in an early "Acts of Paul."

§ 5. *Barsabbas and Barnabas*

There emerges in chapter i yet a further disclosure of the motivation. In verse 23, "Joseph *called* Barsabbas, who was *surnamed* Justus," is alleged to have been nominated in competition with Matthias, the latter being elected. There is no further mention of a Joseph Barsabbas; but in chapter iv, verse 36, we have the story of "Joseph who by the apostles was *surnamed Barnabas* (which is, being interpreted, Son of Exhortation), a Levite, a man of Cyprus by race." While, however, Barnabas figures frequently in the Acts, there is no further mention of Joseph Barsabbas. It is thus particularly remarkable that in chapter xv, verse 22, there are named, after Paul and Barnabas, "*Judas* called Barsabbas, and Silas, *chief men* among the brethren," who are also graded (verse 32) as "prophets." And of this *Judas* Barsabbas, in turn, there is no further mention.

From this tangle of adaptive fabrication there emerges one fairly clear inference. At one stage in the early Jesuist movement there had been a Judas Barsabbas among the leaders. When, in the interests of developed Paulinism or Gentilism, there had been put in currency the story of the betrayal of Jesus by Judas Iscariot, the Judaizing party, realizing the Paulinist plan of making a place in the traditionary twelve for Paul, countered by fabricating a fresh story of the election of Matthias. And, as it was then in the recollection of some that a Judas Barsabbas had been a "chief man among the brethren," it was seen to be further expedient to cover *his* traces by boldly putting a *Joseph* Barsabbas, further disguised as Justus, in competition for the apostleship vacated by Judas

Iscariot. Unfortunately—or fortunately—the enterprising redactor forgot, or failed, to eliminate from the manuscripts the mention of Judas Barsabbas in chapter xv, with its revelation for those who can bring critical intelligence to bear upon it.

§ 6. *General Considerations*

That the whole story of fabrication, figment upon figment, will ever be disentangled it would be rash to predict. The work will certainly not be done by churchmen bent on "saving the face" of early Christianity. But there stands out unmistakably the decisive fact that the gospel myth of Judas Iscariot the Betrayer grew out of the scheming rivalries of Gentilizing Paulinists and self-aggrandizing Judaists, at what time in the second century it is at present impossible to say. The broadly reasonable inference is that the manipulation of the gospels in this regard was made effective at a time when Jewish Christianity was but a small and dwindling remnant, and the bulk of the Church lay in the Greek-speaking lands.

That the Judas story is late to enter the gospels we have seen by simple bibliographical scrutiny, the omission of which alike by Strauss and Volkmar left much of their argumentation à priori, and, as we see in this very instance, unconvincing. Volkmar hamstrung his negative argument against the historicity of the betrayal by positing the theory that the Paulinists were the authors of the "original gospel," and that in that capacity they invented the story.

A study of the texture of the gospels might have opened his eyes to his error. He would have seen at this point, not a primordial narrative, but a late interpolation, alike in Matthew and in Mark; and

might thus have partly guarded others against falling into the then arising error that Mark is the oldest gospel. All he achieved by that twofold error was to make Strauss close his eyes to the overwhelming external argument against the historicity of the Judas story. From rejecting Volkmar's unsound theory of a primordial Paulinizing gospel, Strauss passed blindly to the conclusion that the story of the betrayal is "without doubt historical."

And this is the more astonishing because in his first Life he had calmly pointed to the reasons for inferring that the whole story of the betrayal of the Messiah by one who had sat at meat with him is one of the usual gospel derivations from the Old Testament, the original being the story of David and the traitor Ahithophel, who finally hanged himself (2 Sam. xv, 31 ; xvii, 23), and the verse in the 41st Psalm (verse 9) : "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." That text is actually given in the fourth gospel by Jesus as the motive of his action ; and it was just such clues of Old Testament lore that had led Strauss to see so many items in the gospel story as mythical. The story of the payment to Judas is in the same fashion framed on the passage in Zechariah (xi, 12–13) :—

> And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my hire ; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my hire thirty pieces of silver. And *the Lord* said unto me, Cast it unto the potter [*Syriac* : into the treasury], the goodly price *that I was prized at of them.*

But it was particularly the business of the biographical school to detect the lateness of the betrayal story. Abbé Loisy, who recognizes the

incredibility of the story of the midnight trial before the Sanhedrim, cannot see the equal incredibility of the story of the superfluous betrayal, and discusses it with his usual "*sans doute.*"[1] Yet the extrusion of the Judas story from the gospels as a late interpolation—an extrusion called for by the negation of such a story even in the interpolation as to the resurrection in First Corinthians—would have removed at least one of the most obvious stumbling-blocks to the belief in the historicity of the main story.

Not that the extrusion can finally save the historicity of the rest. Loisy has with signal candour avowed that if the story of the trial before Pilate can be effectively called in question there remains no solid ground for affirming the historicity of Jesus. And that story is by an increasing number of students regarded as incredible and fictitious, the product either of the general evangelical purpose of throwing the guilt of the death of Jesus on the Jews or of a special purpose of dissociating the gospel Jesus from the memory of a human sacrifice in which a "Jesus Barabbas" was originally the annual victim, and latterly the mock victim. Even so the stories of the betrayal by Judas and the denial by Peter can be seen to be results of the Gentile animus against the Twelve in the early Church.[2] Let us ask how Peter could be described

[1] *L'Evangile selon Marc*, 1912, p. 419.

[2] Mr. L. G. Rylands, in his important work on *The Evolution of Christianity* (R. P. A., 1927), writes (p. 178) that "The episode of Peter's denial of Jesus was included in the Gospel according to the Hebrews, an episode so shameful for Peter that no Jewish Christian could have invented it." It should be noted that the documentary basis for this is rather slender, being only a marginal note on Tischendorf's Codex A at Mt. xxvi, 74:—'The Jewish [Τὸ Ἰουδαικόν]: "And he denied and swore and cursed."' Still, it

as holding up his head in the first days at Jerusalem, and dooming Ananias and Sapphira for a far slighter sin, if he were known to have basely and repeatedly denied his Lord—let us ask this, and we get a new vision of the long process of recrimination and imputation between Judaist and Gentile Christians, which in the Acts is sought to be reduced to an accommodation.

It has long been the fashion of clerical exegetes to evade or belittle the significance of that struggle, of which the historic actuality was first made clear by Baur; and even so unconventional a thinker as Dr. Burkitt has applauded the verdict that "It is one of the mistakes of the Tübingen School that it did not recognize that Peter, not only in Acts but in the Pauline Epistles, is on the Hellenistic, not the Hebrew side." "This admirable sentence," writes Dr. Burkitt,[1] "may be taken to mark the end of a long controversy." It really marks the continuance, or revival, of the tactic of putting the spy-glass to the blind eye. To limit the survey to the dubious activities of Peter and Paul as deduced from falsified documents is to exclude from survey the main body of the facts. The cue for "liberal" orthodoxy has always been[2] to claim, as against Baur, that the strife between Paul and Peter was short-lived. The gospel texts, critically studied, are the witness that the real struggle was long, and that the narrative in Acts is a mere dramatization of a protracted schism.[3]

is conceivable that the story was added at a late date to an originally Judaic gospel. Mr. E. B. Nicholson surmises a "Nazarene" MS.

[1] *Christian Beginnings*, p. 57 *note*, citing Professors Jackson and Lake.

[2] *E.g.*, Donaldson, *Crit. Hist. of Christ. Lit.*, 1864, i, 43.

[3] I am moved to add in this connection that Professor Burkitt

VI.—Myth-Theory and Biographical Hypothesis

But, it may be asked, if we accept the historicity of Peter and Paul, in despite of all manner of falsifications of their records and epistles, how shall we deny the historicity of Jesus? That is a large question, not to be disposed of on the particular issue as to the betrayal story, though that story is one of the vital clues. Suffice it at this point to note how the myth theory accounts for elements in the gospel narrative which even the biographical school, taking endless liberties with the texts and multiplying guesses without documentary warrant, find perplexing.

Dr. Albert Schweitzer, for instance, follows the process of latter-day critical disintegration of the gospels up to a point at which, as he justly declares, the current "liberal" or biographical conception of

does not take due account of Baur's exposition in *Das Christenthum*. The English adoption of a Ritschlian in preference to a Baurian attitude is the natural expression of clerical preference for the lax and self-contradictory traditionist over the stricter reasoner. Baur is not at all met by the facile pronouncement cited. Again, in his own verdict (*The Gospel History*, 3rd ed., p. 39), that "Baur and his followers" rejected the claim for the priority of Mark because Matthew has the Sermon on the Mount and Mark has not, Dr. Burkitt is merely extravagant. "This is of course a very crude way of putting the matter," he pleasantly confesses, "but I believe it to be near enough." How that can be said by one who has studied Baur's massive discussion in the *Kritische Untersuchungen über die Kanonischen Evangelien* is a mystery. Baur *could not* have staked his case on the Sermon. He applies a stringent criticism all along the line; a thing never done on the other side in reply. It is much more plausible to say that the Marcan school turned and have clung to their thesis mainly because Mark relieves them from the Birth Story, thus giving a useful lead to the Neo-Unitarian view. This motivation, clear at the starting-point, is now carefully ignored by the champions of the priority of Mark.

Jesus is practically swept away, inasmuch as it has become a mere tissue of contradictions. Then he attempts to establish a new biographical solution, which shall substitute a credible for an incredible account of the turning of the multitude against Jesus when Pilate seeks to save him. Dr. Schweitzer has seen, with the help of Volkmar, that the betrayal story as it stands is a futile invention; but he adheres to the Triumphal Entry, the Rejection, and the Crucifixion; and his own private theory demands a betrayal of some kind.[1]

[1] Dr. J. Warschauer, who in his *Historical Life of Christ* (dedicated to Dr. Schweitzer) follows Dr. Schweitzer at this as at other points, writes (p. 297) that the question *What was it that Judas betrayed?* has been "hardly ever so much as seriously asked." Insofar as this suggests that the question "What was there to betray?" has hardly ever been asked, it should be noted that Dr. Schweitzer, who had put the question in the first-cited form, proceeded from the challenge of Volkmar; that the issue was raised, as above noted, by two English writers, as well as by the French scholar Derenbourg, in the sixties; again, by Cox, in 1895; again, very definitely, by Professor Cheyne in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*; and by Mr. P. C. Sense in 1901. Further, the non-historicity of the betrayal story was affirmed (apart from the general propaganda of the myth-theory) by G. Marquardt in 1900, in his monograph *Der Verrat des Judas Ischarioth: eine Sage*; again by Karl Kautsky in 1908 in his *Der Ursprung des Christenthums* (p. 388); again by the Jewish scholar Louis Germain Lévy, in the French weekly *Les droits de l'homme*, April 23, 1911, in an essay entitled *Que Judas le Traitre n'a jamais existé*; again by Dr. G. Schläger, in the German *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, in 1914, in an able article on *Die Ungeschichtlichkeit des Verraters Judas*, with new arguments; and yet again, in the same periodical in 1916, in a widely learned article by M. Platts, putting the question "Why did the early Christian community attach weight to the tradition of the Judas stories?" Add that, as above noted, the problem has latterly been pressed by Dr. Jacks in the *Hibbert Journal*, and that it has been repeatedly mooted by the present writer in the past thirty-five years, and the facts are broadly in view. The apathy of professional exegetes on the subject, at which Dr. Warschauer exclaims, is in the ordinary way of English official silence. But Dr. Warschauer, for that matter, seems to have profited as little as anybody by the long discussion,

The gospel story of the Rejection is truly astonishing. The miracle-worker who a few days before had been acclaimed by the whole populace as the Son of David is greeted by the same multitude with the roar of "Crucify him"—this as a result of the sudden secret stirrings of the priests. As Schweitzer claims, such a right-about-face by an entire populace in so short a time, with no motive, is incredible.

How, then, does he explain it? By the stupefying proposition[1] that what Judas did was not to "betray" Jesus in terms of the written story but to tell the priests, what they did not know, that Jesus had privately claimed to be the Messiah, and that it was by spreading *this* knowledge among the people that they were moved to execrate the man they had acclaimed. To claim to be Messiah, argues Dr. Schweitzer, was to commit blasphemy. We must promptly and emphatically answer that it was no such thing. To assert that the Jewish people had long collectively expected a Messiah, and that at the same time they held it blasphemy for *any one* to claim to be He, is to put a flat counter-sense. Barcochba was not charged with blasphemy when he made his claim, though he was freely denounced when he failed. The talk of "false Christs" in the New Testament suggests frequency. The gospel Jesus, in the circumstances alleged, would *not* have been popularly execrated; and the recorded execration, taken with the story of the triumphal entry, is incredible and unintelligible.[2]

If, moreover, the priests proceeded with the

[1] Which, as we have seen, Mr. Middleton Murry develops into a conviction that Jesus had a "secret understanding" with Judas.

[2] Compare the views of Wellhausen, as cited by Dr. Montefiore in his Commentary on the Synoptics, i, 356.

populace as Schweitzer suggests, *that* fact must have become known to the Christists, if the rest of the story be true. The disciples are assumed to have got knowledge of trials at which they were not present: how should they, then, have failed to hear of what Judas had really done? Nor was it necessary, as the story stands, for the priests to get any information from Judas in order to question Jesus as to his Messianic claims. The triumphal entry, as described in the synoptics, has a distinctly Messianic aspect, though Schweitzer will not admit it. The only conclusion open to the strictly historical student is that neither episode took place; that there had been no triumphal entry; and that the Barabbas story, which Loisy admits to be unhistorical as it stands, points back to something vitally different from the gospel story—an ancient annual Barabbas sacrifice, a ritual human sacrifice of "the Son of the Father," as to the historic probability of which the details have been elsewhere fully set forth.[1]

Returning, however, to the Judas story, and restricting ourselves to that, we shall find in the mythical theory a solution of all the anomalies which we have been examining. Considered as a Gentile invention to discredit the Judaic Christians and the Twelve, it is readily intelligible. A probable hypothesis is that, in a late form of the mystery drama which can be seen[2] to underlie the gospel chapters of the tragic climax, there was a betrayer who traditionally received the price of blood, the sacrificial victim being always "bought

[1] See *Pagan Christs*, 2nd ed., pp. 146, 162, 182, 185, 186, 199; *The Historical Jesus*, p. 170 *sq.*; and *The Jesus Problem*, pp. 31–9.

[2] See below, Part II, sec. iii.

with a price." The betrayer might naturally be named just *Judaios*, "a Jew"; though it is possible that the Old Testament story of the betrayal of Joseph by Judah and his ten brethren might suggest the name of Judas. In any case, the betrayer, in the mystery drama, would be likely to carry a bag to receive his thirty shekels, which, be it remembered, was the usual price of a slave. To make the traitor a Judas, and to make him one of the Twelve, would be a simple way, for Gentile Christians, to throw fresh odium on the Judaic side.

The Name Iscariot.—The riddle, indeed, is not completely read until we learn how the branded disciple came to be labelled Judas *Iscariot*. A majority of scholars seem to be satisfied that the Greek Ἰσκαριώθ, or Ἰουδας ὁ Ἰσκαριώτης, Judas the Iscariot, stands for an Aramaic Judas Ish-Kerioth, 'the man of Kerioth,' or Karioth, a small town in Judea. But this would be an abnormal way of naming, applied to no other apostle; Wellhausen has even pronounced it philologically impossible; and there have been other speculations. The able philologist Dalman, in his treatise 'The Words of Jesus,'[1] thinks "there is every probability that Ἰσκαριώθ, without the article, was the original reading from which arose through misunderstanding Ἰσκαριώτης as well as Σκαριωθ and Σκαριώτης." Professor Blass, on the other hand, thinks that in Luke (vi, 16; xxii, 3) Judas was originally called *Skarioth*, as in Codex D at vi, 16; while yet another philologist, Schulthess, holds that "Iskariota" in the Syrian translation signifies just *Sicarius* = brigand.[2]

"It is a very plausible conjecture," sums up Dalman, "that Ἰσκαριώθ was already unintelligible

[1] Eng. tr. 1902, i, 51. [2] Klausner, as cited, p. 285 *n*.

to the evangelist." If that is so, it might very well be unintelligible to us. In the circumstances, however, peculiar interest attaches to the thesis of Professor W. B. Smith, who, after an examination of the philological commentators, contends that "we must reject the accepted interpretation 'Man of Karioth' as impossible, and at the same time the notion that the term is gentilitial at all." Professor Smith's conclusions are (1) that the Syriac *Skariot* is an epithet equivalent to the Hebrew verb *sikkarti*=I will deliver up; (2) that the supposed surname is thus, as Wellhausen surmised, merely an aspersive epithet; and (3) that, "Judas" being probably taken as equivalent with *Ioudaios* (Judæus), the residual significance is just "the Jew Surrenderer."[1]

If the very interesting thesis that *Skariot* was but an epithet signifying "surrenderer" should be established, the problem is substantially solved in terms of the myth theory. Judas is once for all not merely not a historical person but a traditional *functionary*, the person who in the mystery-drama played the part of "deliverer-up" of the divine victim, with "Judas," as equivalent to *Judæus*, for prænomen.

And thus we get rid of "this extraordinary conduct of Judas," which so perplexed even Milman, to the uproarious amusement of Carlyle. The rational explanation of the whole mystery is just that it never happened—the answer which has disposed of so many spurious mysteries in natural history and physics. And one would suppose, as aforesaid, that anybody but the unchanging zealots of the historic creed would be glad thus to dispose

[1] *Ecce Deus*, 1912, pp. 303–17.

of the problem of the "extraordinary conduct of *Jesus*," who in the gospels makes no attempt to save his disciple from committing treachery. He is made to tell the penitent thief, who confesses himself worthy of death for his crimes: "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise"—another negation of the gospel sequel, and of Christian doctrine in general. The erring and penitent disciple is ostensibly left to perdition.

The historical student, of course, can no more credit the story of the penitent thief than that of the treachery of Judas. That too is one of the thousand inventions which constitute the gospel narrative. It occurs only in Luke, which is avowedly compiled from many gospels, and, as it stands, certainly contains a multitude of late additions. In Mark the two robbers are crucified with Jesus—as many of the old versions put it, following the text clue indicated in Luke (xxii, 37)—*in order to fulfil the scripture* which said "And he was reckoned with transgressors." We know now that in certain ancient human sacrifices the special victim was placed between two others. But in Mark "they that were with him reproached him"; and in Matthew it is the same. The Luke story is a late theological figment.

Competing Ideals.—So manifestly does the Christian ideal suffer from the strange incongruities of gospel narrative with doctrine that we can readily understand the declaration of the estimable Professor Schmiedel that it would make no difference to his religious consciousness, as a Christian, if Jesus were proved to be an entirely non-historical figure. That is in effect the position taken up by Strauss in his original preface of 1835. "The author," he writes, "is aware that the essence of

the Christian faith is perfectly independent of his criticism. The supernatural birth of Christ, his resurrection and ascension, *remain eternal truths, whatever doubts may be cast on their reality as historical facts*.....A dissertation at the close of the work," he adds, "will show that the dogmatic significance of the life of Jesus remains inviolate."

And, to my knowledge, there are cultured and estimable clergymen in this country who tranquilly stand at some such point of view, which has received a certain philosophic standing at the hands of T. H. Green. Some, with him, trace their ideal to the fourth gospel, admittedly non-historical. They proceed, I suppose, to find the "values" of the gospels in their ethical teaching—separating, of course, the grossly unethical doctrines of salvation by faith, and damnation for unbelief, from the humanist ethic of the Sermon on the Mount. And when we proceed to point out that the Sermon on the Mount is just as unhistorical as the narratives; that by the admission of competent scholars it *cannot* have been a delivered Sermon; that it is demonstrably a literary compilation; that every element in it, down to the form of the Beatitudes, is pre-Christian; even as the forms of "the Son of Man" and "the Son of God" are pre-Christian; and that the theoretic "best" of the idealistic ethic, non-resistance to enemies and love of enemies, is as old as the age of the Maccabees—when we point out all this, the cultivators of the ideal, it is to be presumed, will tranquilly reply, with Dr. Montefiore, that that does not matter to them; that the ideal figure and the ideal teaching are "values," and are as such, for them, all-sufficing.

So be it, for them. After a large part of the world

has for nigh two thousand years lived religiously on a belief in an impossible theory of the universe, knitted with an impossible story of the manner of the establishment of its creed, the system may well go on subsisting for a while at the hands of well-meaning ministers who know its historic unreality. So did the cults of Brahma and Bel and Amun and Osiris and Zeus and Apollo endure for many centuries at the hands of equally enlightened and perhaps benevolent priests, ministering to an unthinking multitude, and utilizing great and beautiful temples which no sane man would seek to ruin.

But, after all, the visionary creeds do in time pass away, and the temples cease to function, before "the unimaginable touch of time." New realities, new visions of the past reality, engender new action; and the transmutation is in terms of the amount of cognition and comprehension, and energy for change, of the aggregate of the new minds who come upon the scene. Always the creeds and the temples are either imperceptibly or swiftly decaying; and it is in virtue of the sense of reality prevailing for the time being that they stand or fade. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear!

For there is another ideal now current among men. The ideal of those who, ceasing to believe in the actuality of the Jesus story, cling to it as a symbol or compendium, may be termed an ideal of Goodness and Moral Beauty detached from the ideal of Truth. But there remains for the rest of us the ideal of Truth, as the one security for a goodness and a beauty which can endure. Beauty and goodness, indeed, are to be realized not under the primary concept of truth, being first perceptible

and desirable in and for themselves; but as little are they to be sought or found by way of a negation of truth. Goodness divorced from truth is in itself a laming conception, a moral pessimism; and a moral beauty likewise so divorced is in precisely the same case.

The well-intentioned devotees of the Christian Ideal are under a burden which they cannot cast off, the burden of the ethical error and unethical temper everywhere entangled with the doctrine in which they find beauty. For the intuitive ideal of goodness is to be purified only by loyalty to the spirit of truth. It is in the last and most systematically factitious of the four gospels that we read the oracle which condemns itself and all who think to tamper vitally with truth in the interests of human well-being: "The Truth shall make you free." That oracle has served for an æon that has thought to find truth by authority and not by search. The new age seeks truth by discarding oracles and searching for it by the freed powers of the human mind. And if the levels of the mental life are to rise and not to fall, it is truth so sought and so found that will prevail.

For there is something essentially demoralizing in the modern official attitude of continued reverence towards a record which even under official exposition is progressively revealed as a tissue of interpolations, made by men with no sense of literary veracity. Dr. Burkitt has very candidly, and yet oddly, avowed[1] that "literary piety is a quality—I will not go so far as to call it an absolute virtue—which hardly makes its appearance in Christendom before 150 A.D. Indeed,

[1] *The Gospel History and its Transmission*, 3rd ed., p. 15.

there is not much of it to be found even then." For "literary piety" read "literary or historical veracity," and there arises the question why Dr. Burkitt does not reckon such a quality an absolute virtue. Is it that he will not see the contrary as a vice? For considerate students he is avowing that the compilers and interpolators of the gospels were unveridical men. If our literary and academic evolution is to end in a consensus that in such a state of things there is no harm, the latter state of Christianity will verily be worse than the first. Arraigned for unreason, it can hardly profit by making light of a vast moral defalcation. The ethical ruin of the New Testament lies in the fact that it forever conjoins a doctrine of love with a propaganda of hate, from its first book to its last, thus revealing the doctrine of love as a new form of "Pharisaism." If to that inner rift there is to be added a claim to build faith and hope on a process of fraud, there will verily not be left one stone upon another.

Part II

THE JESUS MYTH

I.—The Neo-Unitarian Position

It would of course be unjust to the active majority of the clergy of the day to suppose that they either do or would carry on the cult after having realized that it is historically unreal. When Bishop Gore expounds the Sermon on the Mount he does not for a moment doubt that he is setting forth the really uttered words of "Our Lord," whom he so names either as believing him God Incarnate or revering him as the wisest and noblest of all human beings. And to that attitude the scholarly clergy must conform. Dean Inge, whom it is perhaps not indiscreet to designate as the most accomplished Sadducee of the age (albeit a great Scribe), clearly recognizes that, for average Church-of-England purposes, it would never do to admit that the gospel Jesus is merely a "Cult-Hero," like Adonis or Attis.

For, whatever may be the powers of sincere religionists like Professor Schmiedel in the way of ideal-worship, the British taxpayer will never consent to support a Christian State Church of which the accredited leaders avow that Jesus Christ never really existed. The deans and chapters must find a more practicable solution than that, be it Unitarian or Trinitarian. As a doughty champion of orthodoxy puts it: "The Christianity of

Green is a mere phantom, and whatever be its speculative validity, it has nothing of the efficacy of a gospel."[1] The champion himself takes the safe course of outfacing doubt with rhetoric, for which there is always a facile audience.

Green, in fact, was at this point the disciple of Strauss, who in his youth had the Hegelian assurance to tell the world that the critics who supposed they were destroying the "truth" of the Christian faith by exposing the incredibility of the gospel history were "frivolous." Strauss was perfectly serious. He was not saying, as a humorous philosopher might, that it was ridiculous to expect to get rid of a time-honoured and well-endowed church system by merely showing that the gospel narratives are no more true than the God-stories of Homer and Hesiod, or the religion of Isis and Osiris, seeing that salaried priesthoods were never subversible by such criticism. Strauss had no humour for such issues. He was seriously explaining that, though Jesus was nothing like what the gospels said, there is a philosophic sense in which God is incarnate in the human race, and that the Christian system can quite soundly and profitably be readjusted to that view.

To a non-Hegelian mind, the concluding treatise in which Strauss elaborates this ærial structure may be said to represent solemn "frivolity" raised to the highest powers of verbiage. Even in Germany it counted for practically nothing as against the ordinary sense of veracity, whether for believers

[1] Professor David Smith, D.D., of Londonderry. *The Historic Jesus*, n. d., p. 19. Dr. Smith's protest would seem to point also against Dr. C. G. Montefiore, who, without professing to seek a "gospel," seems to argue that the Jesus figure is efficacious whether or not the sayings put in his mouth are genuine.

or for unbelievers; and in his old age, writing his book on 'The Old Faith and the New,' Strauss was content to ignore his early Hegelian fantasy. Ideal-worshippers there doubtless were in Germany as elsewhere; but Christology in Germany as in England has gone on evolving on the old lines—always changing, that is, in its forms, but always proceeding on the assumption that somewhere underneath the tissue of fables and fictions in the gospels there is to be found a Personality of some kind, who taught Something, which somehow is to be got at.

The vogue of Professor Albert Schweitzer in England illustrates the procedure. For a time that gifted and versatile enthusiast was in great favour as having shown that the "liberal" or Neo-Unitarian attempt to set forth a historical Jesus had broken down, and that the myth-theorists, whose books (when not German) he absurdly falsified without having read them, were talking mere nonsense. Then, rather suddenly, it was realized that this destructive criticism of the critics counted rather against than for faith, and there was a reaction. The late Professor Sanday had delivered a course of Schweitzerian lectures at Oxford and Cambridge in 1907, creating, we are told, "a furore among the younger men." They must have supposed, with the venerable lecturer, that to make hay with the Neo-Unitarian Lives of Jesus was somehow to restore or buttress the faith that was delivered to the saints. When the book in question was translated (1910) under the title of 'The Quest of the Historical Jesus,' and published with a preface by Professor F. C. Burkitt, it was found that the people most edified were the supporters of the myth theory; whereupon Professor

Sanday pathetically explained in the *Hibbert Journal* (1911) that he had been over-hasty in supporting it.

He certainly had been. Schweitzer's conception of Jesus, though eloquently assertive of the historicity of Somebody, who either taught or believed Something, is far more destructive of the credibility of the gospels as records than are the diverging biographical reconstructions of the Neo-Unitarian schools from Renan onwards. His affirmations are simply deductions reached by him from emotional assumptions that have no more scientific justification than those of Renan.[1] And that seems to be why, in despite of the sad defection of Professor Sanday, he has still a religious following.

It was one of those followers who in 1913 translated a prior work by him, of which the German title had been 'The Mystery of the Messiahship and the Passion: A Sketch of the Life of Jesus,' but which in the English version[2] appears as 'The Mystery of the Kingdom of God,' with the subtitle of 'The Secret of Jesus' Messiahship and Passion.' The religious "value" of this treatise appears to be held to lie in its fervent conviction that, whatever Jesus may have said or done or thought, he really reached a final conviction as to his Messiahship, to the effect that it was "futuristic" —that is, realizable only through death. Such a doctrine—here laid down much more unreservedly

[1] The Rev. Dr. Vacher Burch is within his rights (though he exceeds them in his terminology) when he complains in his *Jesus Christ and His Revelation* (1927, p. 17) that Dr. Schweitzer "remade Jesus in terms of Jewish Apocalyptic. He was a more thorough talmudizer than most of the writers he had analysed."

[2] Translated, with an Introduction, by Mr. Walter Lowrie.

than in the QUEST—suffices certain religious minds as keeping for them, after all, a real Founder, a Jesus who did foresee his Church, and who therefore can be fitly worshipped, whatever may happen to the creed of Virgin Birth and Miracles and Resurrection. In a fashion sufficiently different from Strauss's, Schweitzer has ostensibly salved the dogma of Divine Sacrifice for at least some ecclesiastical purposes, and a Judas to boot!

It will probably not interfere with the limited success open to such a performance that Dr. Schweitzer has made out his case as inexpensively as he proved that Judas must have done something quite different from what the gospels say he did. The gospels are for the theorist a mass of texts yielding no totality of historical sense, but capable of supplying a selection that, with sufficiently imaginative treatment, will bear at least one theory. The rival theorist Wrede, Professor at Breslau (now deceased), had powerfully argued that the Messianic element in the gospels is *post mortem*; that Jesus was simply a Moral Teacher or Preacher, an earnest Reformer who had not regarded himself as a Messiah; and that the Messianic Jesus cult was set up only after his death, with the story of his resurrection. Schweitzer on the other hand sees in Jesus, primarily, a believer in the speedy end of the world, who preaches an "interim ethic," and who *must* have told his disciples he was the Messiah, because otherwise his disciples could never have had the idea of making him one.

Irreverent analogies suggest themselves; but we need not apply them. The Christians who cannot assimilate the orthodox system will doubtless choose, according to their temperaments, between the Teacher who delivered the Sermon on the

Mount, miraculously preserved by illiterates without the aid of reporters, and the Jesus who, knowing the end of the world to be near, supplied only an "interim ethic" pending the materialization of the Kingdom of God, in which he was to appear as the slain and resurrected Messiah.

The open-minded reader will perceive that these rival constructions from the gospel material, each ignoring the bulk of the other's case, are the work of energetic self-willed students applying, as Arnold would say, the German plan of expounding a theory with "vigour and rigour" at whatever cost to the data. The English reader can find an interesting example of the type and the process in the work of the late Mr. Clutton-Brock on 'Shakespeare's Hamlet,' wherein is presented an intuitively conceived Hamlet who is "expressed" and yet "not expressed" in the text; who suffers from an "Unconscious" that takes charge of his consciousness; and who dies leaving Horatio to communicate Freudian facts which the dramatist does *not* communicate.

Arnold, in his turn, had visualized the gospel Jesus with just the same amiable arbitrariness, in his own fashion. All the criticism of the Fourth Gospel as unhistorical he puffed aside in his most pontifical manner. He felt that he knew better. For him, certain texts exhibit Jesus, not of course as a God, but as the incarnation of "sweet reasonableness." All the many texts which do *not* do this, accordingly, are placidly left out of account, or saddled on the disciples, who, poor men, did not understand what was said to them, though it must have been through them that whatever Jesus did say had been preserved, if there was any truth in the total story.

It is this perpetual play of subjective caprice in the face of a great historical problem that has impelled open-minded students to face it faithfully in the spirit of historical science, treating the documents as honest historians try to treat all documents, seeking loyally to find real historical matter if any there be, and prepared to confess where it is lacking.

It should be noted at this point, however, that the phrase, "Treat the Bible like any other book," which is sometimes used in this connection, is apt to be misleading. The historical problem involved stands by itself;[1] for there is no parallel in historiography (save in the Old Testament) to such a set of documents as the gospels, demonstrably a stratification of accretions, made with varying "tendential" purposes. To prove that Lycurgus is a non-historical figure, as has been done by modern scholars, is a comparatively simple matter, calling only for recognition of certain plain discrepancies in the records, and, at the same time, of the normal proclivity of all ancient history-builders to posit a pre-eminent Founder for any State or institution. But to grasp the problem of the founding of Christianity there is needed a broad survey of the subject-matter of what may be termed the "human" sciences, which are often only slightly known to the documentary scholars who deal with the New Testament.

These sciences are: (1) Anthropology, as it is conceived in England: that is, in sum, the knowledge of the whole cultural life, including the

[1] I am told by Dr. Edward Greenly that the Maha-pari-nibbana Sutta, unique in this respect among the Buddhist Pittakas, is a patently composite document. It tells of the last days of the Blessed One.

religious ideas and practices, of savages or "primitives" and barbarians; (2) Mythology, as surveyed and collected by the specialists in that department; and (3) Hierology, or the science of the growth, construction, and evolution of Religions in general—the field which is still commonly described by the clumsy and ungrammatical name of Comparative Religion. These essentially modern sciences are as a rule not studied by the special students of the New Testament; and when a specialist in those sciences does come in contact with the New Testament problem, as in the case of one of the very greatest of them, Sir J. G. Frazer, he is found refusing to apply to it one of the avowed fundamental principles of his own science.

He who would critically face the New Testament problem, then, must have a general vision of the process of growth and building up of ancient religions in general, so that he may see the *cult* of Christ (independently of the documents) as a body of phenomena broadly analogous to those of the cults of Krishna and Buddha, Adonis and Attis, Isis and Osiris, Yahweh, Zeus, Apollo, Athênê, Dionysos, Serapis and Mithra. Not till he has considered how all these came to arise and flourish is he reasonably entitled to come to conclusions as to the necessity for "Personalities" as founders of any cult.

It is a problem with two sides—that of the creeds and rituals, rooted in folk-lore, and that of the economic process which builds up a folk-cult to the status of a system of revenue-earning temples and priesthoods. In the cult of Yahweh, the priesthood, by the avowal of the competent scholars, is a revenue-seeking corporation from the point of the extinction of the local shrines to the last stand for

the temple of Jerusalem as the house of the true Rain-God. Yet the question is still quite commonly pronounced upon without even the preliminary proceeding of asking whether any of the God-names cited, which so long held, and of which some still hold, the adoring faith of millions of human beings, can conceivably stand for any originating Personalities at all.

So vital an issue as that of the origination of the Christian creed and Church is to be faced with the widest alertness to all the phenomena of religious evolution. Presuppositions as to the function of Personalities in the foundation of creeds have no more right of authority than inherited beliefs in the divine inspiration of sacred books. The task must be faced in the spirit of inductive science, if we are ever to reach inferences comparable in solidity to those of the accredited sciences, in contrast with which the mass of theology and theological pseudo-sociology is but a play of subjective prejudice.

But let us not fail to acknowledge that from chairs of theology, in Germany and Holland if not in England, have come potent reinforcements to the movement of radical criticism. Professor Van den Bergh van Eysinga, calling attention to the part played by Dutch scholars in the preparation of and for the myth theory, himself dispassionately yet crushingly rebuts the nugatory argument that there *must* have been one abnormal Personality as the first factor in the creation of Christianity.[1] And while the remaining English acolytes of Dr. Schweitzer are still burning incense to his name, the German experts are passing him by, dismissing his compromise as untenable.

[1] *La littérature chrétienne primitive*, Paris, 1926 : *Avant-propos.*

Time and again, official scholars have come within sight of true critical inferences which their "eternal halfness" withheld them from accepting. Thus Professor Blass, in his lecture on 'Die Entstehung und der Charakter unserer Evangelien' (1907, p. 22), suddenly observes that "on Harnack's method the Denial by Peter—in all the gospels—must be asserted out of ill-will to Peter," and that the same reasoning applies to the story of the folly of the mother of James and John. It is really a sound inference, though neither Harnack nor Blass will accept it; and other scholars, thus challenged, take the step they blench at.

This book had been completed when there came to hand the monograph of Professor Rudolf Bultmann, now of Marburg University, on 'Jesus' (1926), written for a German popular series on 'The Immortals.' For popular purposes it is "embellished with cuts" (at the end); but in the preface the eminent scholar unflinchingly reveals his critical standpoint:—

"There will not be found (*es fehlen*) in the following pages generalizations (*sämtliche Wendungen*) on the themes of Jesus as Great Man, Genius, or Hero: he appears neither as daemonic nor as fascinating; his words are not exhibited as profound, his faith not as compelling (*gewaltig*), his nature not as childlike. But neither is there anything on the eternal value of his mission, on his revelation of the timeless deeps of the human soul, or anything of that sort: the eye is solely directed to what he had *willed*, and what thereanent the Present can become as a furthering of his historical existence.

"For this reason also is the interest of the Personality of Jesus excluded. Not that I make a merit of a lack. For in truth I am of the opinion that we can learn no more (*so gut wie nichts mehr*) of the life and the personality of Jesus, *because the Christian sources have not concerned themselves thereon*[1] save very fragmentarily, and under an overgrowth

[1] Italics ours.

of legend. What has been written during a hundred and fifty years on the life of Jesus, his personality, his inner development, and so forth, is—insofar as it is not critical investigation—fantastic and romancist.

"One receives a strong impression of the kind when, for instance, one reads the brilliantly written *Geshichte der Leben-Jesu Forschung* (2nd ed. 1913) of Dr. Albert Schweitzer, or when one constates the differing verdicts of researchers on the Messianic consciousness of Jesus. Let it be remembered how greatly the verdicts diverge as to whether Jesus held himself the Messiah or not, and, if yes, in what sense, and at what time, and so on. When we remember, further, that it was really no small matter to think oneself the Messiah, that rather he who so regarded himself must have been thereby decisively specialized (*bestimmt*) in his whole nature, we must confess this: when doubt rules on such a point, it signifies that we know as good as nothing of the personality in question. I am personally of the opinion that Jesus had not held himself to be the Messiah; but I do not pretend to myself that on that ground I have a clearer idea of his personality."

It is one of the ironies of debate that Dr. Bultmann, who also abandons many items of the Teaching, still thinks he has an audition of Jesus as Teacher; but none the less is his dismissal of the spurious predication about the Personality of Jesus a telling rebuke to the traditionists who so cheaply vend it, and a preparation for the sober study of the more radical theorem that the figure of the gospel Jesus is merely mythical.

It is important to realize that it is on the *gospel* Jesus that the debate turns, not on an issue as to whether "there was a somebody." If it were argued that behind the composite structure of the gospels there *may* have lain an obscure historical episode which has partly affected that structure, there could be no critical demur. The investigation began, for the present writer, with an attempt to find such an episode, the starting-point being the Talmudic Jesus "Ben Pandira" or "Ben

Satda" or "Ben Stada." And though that clue cannot be traced to any decision, it is still impossible to rule it out of the area of possibilities. But what cannot be done is to find in the fugitive figure of the Talmudic Jesus the "Personality" alleged by the à priori argument. That argument-in-a-circle is scientifically worthless, inasmuch as it evades all the facts as to cult formation in the absence of any shadow of pretence of a Teacher of commanding personality. The Personality of the Gospels is demonstrably a literary formation.

The one clear opening in the documents for a theory of personal emergence occurs in respect of a circumstance never critically faced by the biographical school, namely, the Galilean background. In the gospels that background is built up to no purpose. The Christ emerges, operates, and in a manner triumphs in Galilee; then fails and leaves it to die at Jerusalem; where, nevertheless, he is made to speak of returning to the Galilean scene. Yet not even is the supernatural machinery used to make him do so; and there is finally no reason for believing that there was ever any Galilean "Christianity" at all. This is expressly admitted by the defence. Here then is a ground for surmising that "something" quite alien to the gospel story had happened in Galilee which motived the gospel parade of that locality; and a tentative hypothesis in that regard is submitted in the Epilogue to the present work. But, once for all, this is no fulfilment of the assumption of a supernormal Personality answering to the gospel Jesus. That, we shall see, remains a fiction, a Myth.

II.—Historical and Textual Analysis

The study is not in the least a fore-planned campaign of "destruction." It is not a strategy of "materialists." It may be said to have germinated, after the excursion of Bruno Bauer in pre-imperial Germany, from the scientific textual studies of a number of Dutch theologians (notably Pierson and Loman)—certainly not a revolutionary or a flighty tribe. Two of the foremost living exponents of the Myth Theory, Professor Arthur Drews and Professor W. B. Smith, are avowed theists. The undertaking is simply a more scrupulous continuation of the work of historic criticism, begun long before Renan, handled by him rather artistically than scientifically, and more vigilantly carried on by many serious scholars since. The real impulsion to an ever more radical treatment of the problem is just the failure of the would-be biographers to reach a cogitable solution—the failure that has been insisted on by Schweitzer, to the temporary satisfaction of Oxford and Cambridge, and fatally repeated by himself.

The present writer, as he has elsewhere stated, began more than forty years ago to trace, sociologically, the actual historic growth of the Christian Church, on the unhesitating assumption that it began with a Teaching Jesus, who had Twelve Disciples. It was the simple effort to connect that assumption historically with the whole of the documentary evidence that gradually forced him to surrender, item by item, the supposed primary data, and so postpone indefinitely the sociological construction he had set out to make, in favour of the necessary research as to the real foundations of the entire system.

This research involves at once the use of the labours of many modern scholars, from Baur and Strauss to Wrede and Schweitzer, and a bibliographical study of the text which neither these nor the specialists in textual scholarship have properly made. Concentrating on the problem of the compilation of the gospels from each other or from "sources," they miss many of the phenomena of perpetual accretion by late inventions as to action, though they recognize interpolations of doctrine. We have seen how all alike have overlooked the plain textual traces of the late interpolation of the Judas story, though the recognition of these might have actually saved the biographical theory from one of its most flagrant difficulties.

The Drama.—They have equally missed the textual evidence which goes to prove that the five-act story of the Supper, the Agony, the Capture, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection, as it stands in the first two of the synoptics, was a *dramatic* text, reduced to narrative form with a minimum of necessary narrative, and added to the gospels after these, or some of them, were in circulation. This proposition used to be scouted on the score that Jewry was inveterately hostile to drama. It can hardly be so scouted by the expanding school of professional exegetes who see in the gospels a Hellenistic formation. German academic scholarship now avows the Greekish derivations of many of the wonder stories,[1] after the late Dr. Conybeare had derided the idea to the satisfaction of the traditionists; and Professor Burkitt and others avow the strength of the Hellenistic influence even at Jerusalem. The emergence of Greek influence

[1] E.g. Bultmann, *Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition*, p. 147.

in a mystery drama thus becomes likely rather than otherwise.[1]

And, though the main strength of the case lies in the actual dramatic morphology of the gospels at this point, the probability is enhanced by the known existence of mystery dramas in connection with the worship of Osiris and other Saviour Gods. Perhaps the most important parallel of all is that cited by Professor Van den Bergh van Eysinga[2] in connection with the cult of Herakles, who, we know, was historically described by Diodorus Siculus (i, 2) as "going about doing good." As the Dutch scholar notes, the Senecan tragedy *Hercules on Oeta* is probably based on a previous "Stoico-Cynic" Greek tragedy attributed to Diogenes of Sinope, which is likely to have been a more interesting performance.

In Seneca's drama the Demigod, son of Jove by a mortal mother, details his services in freeing men of many evils, and claims to be received up into heaven. He has slain the devouring monsters; he has "descended into hell" and let the sunshine into the den of Cerberus; he has destroyed the Earth-God Antæus, and smitten down Busiris before his altars of human sacrifice. All the nations praise him: he has punished all manner of crimes with his naked hands: he asks but permission to ascend to heaven: he can find the way for himself through death. Through the jungle of the declamation of Seneca we follow the myth of Herakles and the vengeful Deianira. He, the analogue of Samson, is no "sinless" and sexless

[1] In this connection cf. T. Whittaker's study on "Origen and Celsus," in *The Metaphysics of Evolution*, etc., 1926, p. 229.

[2] *La littérature chrétienne primitive*, 1926: *Avant-propos*, pp. 16–18.

demigod, and the jealousy of his wife brings upon him the torture of the shirt of Nessus, for which he rends Lichas.

He, the universal victor, groans and weeps; his dolorous mother, Alcmena, comes to weep with him; but he masters his agony and resolves to die, undefeated, on the great pyre of his own ordaining, showing no weakness, comforting his mother till she can look on dry-eyed, and encouraging his comrades by his perfect fortitude in death. "Hark, my Father calls me, and opens the heavenly gates! Father, I come!" are his dying words. Then, when the *mater dolorosa* has gathered his ashes and has called on the world to mourn with her, there comes the voice of the ascended Herakles telling her to weep no more, as he has risen to heaven and sits with the immortals, having a second time vanquished death.[1]

Very different, certainly, is the short and simple and sexless tragedy appended to the gospels, the work, happily, of less literate hands than Seneca's; but equally a commemoration of a Cult-Hero who never lived. Simpler models than we can find in the secondary Senecan tragedy had served for the other; but a drama there was, staging the primordial sacrament and the primordial sacrifice; and the terse transcription at the end of the gospels reveals it.

Let the student turn for himself to the story of the Agony in Matthew and Mark and note how (Mt. xxvi, 44–6; Mk. xiv, 40–2), by the overlooking of an "exit" and an "enter," there has been a

[1] Professor Van Eysinga tells how a boy who had read the Professor's summary in his Dutch work on *Pre-Christian Christianity* copied the citations from Seneca for an exercise on the death of Christ, and received the congratulations of his pastor!

transposition of phrase which runs two speeches into one. Jesus is made to say, in one speech: "Sleep on now and take your rest;.....Arise, let us be going"; where in the drama he must have been made to say: "Sleep on now, and take your rest" on his *second* entrance; the final "it is enough" speech being spoken on the *third* entrance. Only a dilapidated dramatic text, uncomprehendingly followed, could have admitted of the confusion. Missing the clue of the dramatic character of the section, scholars such as Bleek, Volkmar, and Wellhausen have been content with the bad solution of making "Sleep on" an interrogation or an antiphrasis; while Loisy[1] finally takes the words to be addressed to the rest of the disciples, who, "without doubt," had remained awake! Still he finds the phrases "rather incoherent than lifelike," and surmises that a redactor has added the "It is enough" clauses. Dr. Montefiore tersely avows, without a hint of the dramatic *theory*, that "the triple going and coming are dramatic, but scarcely historic." The theory tells why.

Equally does the inference of a dramatic text explain the strange taciturnity of the disciples at the supper, over which even the exegetes have been moved to perplexity. Judas is declared to be a traitor, and they sit with him through the meal, doing nothing to interfere with his action. Plainly we are reading fiction; but why should fiction be so woodenly framed? We have only to realize it as drama, and the thing becomes intelligible. By face and gesture, in the play, the disciples could show their horror and their aver-

[1] *L'Évangile selon Marc*, in loc.

sion. It is the strict reduction of drama to bare narrative that makes the scene inconceivable.

The value of the all-round critical method, noting alike the textual phenomena and the significance of the content, is seen at once in that it explains the otherwise inexplicable unverisimilitude of the story of the Agony. Critics like Schweitzer, professedly recognizant of the anomalies of the "liberal" biography, no less than the journalists, lay and clerical, who deride the myth theory all round, are capable of believing in the historicity of a narrative which tells what Jesus said in prayer when, as the same narrative tells, the very disciples who had been selected to keep special watch had fallen asleep.

The story as it stands is the perfection of incredibility. We are told that the three chosen disciples, after seeing their Master "greatly amazed and sore troubled," and after being told by him, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: abide ye here, *and watch*," are found by him asleep as soon as he has spoken his prayer of three lines. There is no suggestion of an interval. They were asleep while he was praying! And these alleged prodigies of callous heedlessness are accepted as the witnesses to the words of the prayer![1]

Let the reasoning reader ask himself, How came such a literary absurdity to be penned? and he will see there is only one solution. No serious narrator could have *invented* such a story *to be read*. But the moment we realize it as originally a drama the

[1] It is significant of the nature of the "historical sense" of Dr. Klausner that, concerning this story of things seen and heard by men sound asleep, he pronounces that "The whole story bears the hall-mark of human truth; only a few details are dubious." Among these he does *not* recognize the central falsity.

literary absurdity disappears. The *spectator* was meant to *see* the Saviour falling on the ground, and to *hear* him praying; the slumber of the disciples created for him as spectator no difficulty. It was only when the drama was faithfully and reverently reduced to narrative form,[1] by simple souls incapable of critical reflection, that the whole thing became the incredibility it is for us in the gospels.

In the third gospel some perception of difficulties is already to be surmised. The fusion of two speeches to the sleeping disciples into one is avoided, only a final speech being given, though the disciples are quaintly described as "sleeping for sorrow."[2] It may have been that the third gospel-writer, or a redactor, had access to a simpler text of the drama, though on the other hand this text at other points agrees with Matthew and Mark. The same inference of an awakening sense of difficulty is suggested by the fact that in Luke the story of the midnight trial before the Sanhedrim disappears.

Here again, a recognition of the *dramatic* structure of the text in the earlier gospels would

[1] One of the established results of gospel bibliography is that the "early gospel" or gospels *lacked the story of the tragedy.* It must have been added *en bloc* when the MS. of the mystery-drama was released. Dr. Burch, in the work already cited, tells us (p. 39) that "Among the *newest* results of the critical study of the gospels are those which demonstrate that the birth and youth and *crucifixion*, in the expanded form of the received Greek text, are documents appended to the original extent of the *Lives* of Jesus Christ." Any one who cares to consult *The Synoptic Problem for English Readers*, by Alfred J. Jolley (1893), will find presented, thirty-four years ago, those "newest" results, which had been previously reached by B. Weiss. And it was all done from an orthodox point of view. To some of us it communicated light which has not yet reached Dr. Burch.

[2] Dr. Klausner confidently describes them as sleeping off a heavy meal!

have relieved the biographical school of a stumbling-block. But they refuse to be relieved; they must hold on to anything that helps anyhow to fill a gap. Professor Schweitzer likewise refuses. He must have the Agony for his theory of the "self-consciousness" of Jesus, as he must have a traitorous Judas to tell the priests that Jesus claims to be Messiah; though alike in the impossible story of the night trial and in Luke's story of the trial at dawn Jesus is made to say enough, from Schweitzer's own point of view, to be accused of "blasphemy" without any revelation from Judas.

Again returning to that lamentable figure, let us confront Professor Schweitzer's manipulation of the gospel story with the question, What *had* Jesus taught his disciples? Nay, what did he have disciples *for*? To keep them in darkness? To qualify them for crazy treachery? To develop in the best of them a psychic state which enabled them to fall asleep immediately after he has told them he is sorrowful unto death, and bids them keep watch?

The Group's Mode of Life.—These are not captious questions: they are the challenges necessary to rouse to attention those who have dutifully read the gospels without due critical reflection; those who, as did the present writer in his youth, before he was forced to scrutiny, take for granted that a wandering Teacher with twelve selected disciples, whose sole ostensible occupation is casting out devils and listening to parables, presents a quite natural historical aspect. On inquiry it will be found that the picture is a factitious construction, hardly more plausible for Palestine than it would have been for a modern community.

And the synoptics not merely fail to exhibit the

economic mode of life of the wandering group: they give contradictory accounts, evidently framed separately for doctrinal or forensic purposes. In one story Jesus is made to say that "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." In another, referring to John the Baptist as an ascetic, who had on that score been labelled as possessed by a demon, he is made to say: "The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber" —a kind of reproach of which there has been no previous hint. In the very next chapter (Mt. xii) we are told how his disciples "were hungry, and began to pluck the ears of corn and eat them." In Luke (vii, 33–6) the speech about eating and drinking is immediately followed by the story of Jesus accepting the invitation of a Pharisee "to eat with him." These separate stories, like that of the order to the disciple to "leave the dead to bury their dead" which follows on the "Foxes have holes" apologue, are doctrinary inventions. *The gospels show no knowledge of the actual life of the alleged Teacher and his Twelve Disciples.*

In the narrative of the sending out of the Twelve to "preach" and to work miracles, the Lord is made to say: "*Get you* no gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses.....*for the labourer is worthy of his hire.*" As if, in the alleged circumstances, they *could* get gold and silver. And all this in the same breath with the declaration: "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves." This again, by the admission of students who believe in a historical Jesus, is the figment of a period in which the established cult, as seen on foot in the adapted 'Teaching of the Twelve Apostles,' was

carried on by peregrinating "prophets" who were maintained for a day or two at a time by those to whom they ministered, already loosely organized in groups. The twelve disciples could have had no such pretext in the alleged situation, with a gospel consisting solely in the phrase: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." The commission and command to "Heal the sick, *raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils*," is a sufficient assurance that here we are outside history.

When we find Dr. Klausner explaining with his usual certitude that "*Jesus felt the fatigue of constant teaching*, and after his enemies had become numerous he sent out [his] twelve disciples that *they too* might preach the speedy coming of the kingdom of heaven and the need for repentance and good works," we realize anew the fatality of uncritical traditionism. The Christian reader will doubtless recall that Matthew expressly alleges (xi, 1) that *as soon as* Jesus had given his missionary disciples their instructions "he departed thence *to teach* and preach in their cities." The Jewish critic, bent on presenting a realistic figure, cancels as many texts as do not suit him, and ignores the fact that the gospel upon which he professes specially to rely, that according to Mark, is at this point even more palpably unhistorical than the other.

But the true rebuttal of all the biographical accommodations and inventions lies in recognizing the demonstrable lateness of the entire story of the mission of the Twelve.

III.—The Twelve Myth

A certain slight air of actuality, doubled with a much stronger suggestion of symbolism, attaches to the synoptic account of the choosing of the first four disciples. Immediately after being "tempted of Satan" and being ministered to by angels, Jesus, according to Mark, "preaches the gospel of God, saying, The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the evangel." That is as much as we ever learn of the evangel preached later by the disciples. The Saviour then accosts two fishermen, the brothers Simon and Andrew, saying, "Come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men"; and "straightway" they followed him. Another pair, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, are similarly accosted and enrolled. In this case the father, a Galilean fisherman, has hired servants.[1]

So far, if we are prepared to grant that the supernatural figure presented by Mark may have been a real person haloed and magnified later by tradition, and that a commanding personality might thus hypnotize fishermen, the story might be reckoned biography, inasmuch as, after an apparently interpolated paragraph, relating miracles, the scene shifts to the house of Simon, the four disciples attending. In the next chapter, after more miracles, Levi the son of Alphæus, a toll gatherer, is called to discipleship in the same fashion. When we note that in the Talmud the problematic Jeschu "ben Panthera" or "ben

[1] A touch probably invented to satisfy the reader that no wrong was done to the father.

Pandira," who dates a century earlier, is said to have had five disciples, it seems possible that that may be a historic basis. But when we further note that the names given to those five disciples in the Talmud are Matthai, Nakai, Netzer, Boni, and Thoda, there is seen to be strong ground for suspecting a retrospective myth. The names appear to have been loosely invented to account, first, for Matthew and Mark, the gospel authors; secondly (Netzer) for the "Nazarene" sect; and thirdly (Boni) for the "Ebionite" sect; while "Thodi" (which, however, suggests the "Thaddæus" of the gospel list) may have been motived by that of Theudas (Acts v, 36).[1]

From that dubious beginning we proceed straight to the sudden "calling" of the twelve "whom he named apostles" (Lk. vi, 13) on the mountain top (Lk. vi, 12; Mk. iii, 13; Matthew says nothing of a mountain). Among them are two Judases, one being Iscariot "who became a traitor" (Lk. vi, 16). In all the synoptics the details vary. Levi the son of Alphæus disappears, and a Matthew is substituted, with a James the son of Alphæus. Only in Luke are there two Judases: in the other lists a Thaddaeus takes the place of one.

In the fourth gospel, which gives a totally different account of the calling of the first five (Andrew, Simon Peter, another unnamed, Philip and Nathaniel), Jesus goes up to Jerusalem, and

[1] Dr. Klausner (p. 29) writes that "Thus we have both Mattai and Naqai, who are obviously, as Krauss perceived, Matthew and Luke." The cited work of Krauss appeared in 1902. The matter is of no great importance; but it may be noted that such a theory (with Mark instead of Luke; and suggesting the Ebionites as the basis of the name Boni, and the Nazaræans as the basis of that of Netzer) was put by the present writer in 1893 and again in 1900. See *Christianity and Mythology*, first ed., p. 375.

makes many converts in Samaria, *before* there is any mention of "the twelve," and they are suddenly introduced (vi, 68) without any list whatever, and with no account of a "calling." Nor does any synoptic ever tell us how the company of thirteen was maintained, though the fourth gospel takes for granted a "bag," of which Judas was keeper and plunderer.

If there had been a real historical list, how were such variations possible in such a vital matter?

Turning to the Epistles, we find no trace of any knowledge of a Twelve save in the one passage in I Cor. xv—an interpolation *in* an interpolation. "Paul" shows no knowledge of such a body. In Galatians he speaks of "chiefest" apostles, and "pillars," never of a Twelve. All that we can infer from the interpolation is, as aforesaid, that it was made when currency had been found for a story of the appointment of Twelve, but *before* there had been any written story of the betrayal by Judas. This is the first documentary standing ground for those who profess to stand by documents.

How then could the story of the Twelve have come into existence? The primary orthodox assumption is that Jesus appointed twelve apostles because there had been Twelve Tribes of Israel. In the eighteenth century, the historian Mosheim made the much more important suggestion that the choice of number was made *because the Jewish High Priest had Twelve Apostles*, who served as his messengers and collectors among the Jews dispersed in Gentile countries. That is unquestioned historical fact. And when, in 1883, there was published the recovered manuscript of the 'Teaching [*Didachê*]

of the Twelve Apostles,'[1] once widely used in the early Church, but thereafter completely suppressed, Mosheim's hypothesis received a new and decisive development for those who were ready to draw the plain inferences.

That document is, throughout the first six sections, obviously and wholly Judaic—just such an ethical allocution as the High Priest could address to the Jews of the Dispersion in their synagogues. Then come Christian accretions, beginning with a rule for baptism, of which rite only in the fourth gospel are we told that it was practised by Jesus. The inevitable inference is that what had been a Jewish encheiridion, bearing the title of 'The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles,' became a Jesuist or Christist one, with Christist specifications; and that the use of the Jewish foundation and title *entailed* the invention of a Christian story of an appointment of twelve apostles by the Founder. It was the absolute lack of any real historical list that left the way open for the variations in the gospel list, of which the Matthæan is perhaps the earliest as they now stand.

Even at the stage of the Christian expansion of the 'Teaching,' the Christist doctrine is primitive. Jesus at the first naming (c. 9) is "thy [the Father's] servant," who has made known "the holy vine of David." *There is no doctrine of salvation through sacrifice, no mention of the crucifixion or the resurrection.* And in c. 14, in the remarkable phrase "the Lord's Day of the Lord" (Kuriakēn Kuriou) or "the Lord's Lord's-day," we have the decisive proof that there were "Lord's-days" of other religions, the Christian being only one of a number.

[1] A revised translation of this document, with notes, is appended to the author's volume on *The Jesus Problem.*

Here we have a document evidently older than much of the matter of our gospels, to which it makes no allusion save in the phrase (c. 8) "as the Lord commanded in his gospel," referring to the Lord's Prayer, which we know to have been pre-Christian. The curtain has been lifted on a primitive Christist community, employing and expanding a manual taken over from the Jewish Twelve Apostles, with not even a pretence of a list of names of a Christian Twelve. Thus go by the board, as myth, the Christian Twelve, and with them Judas, "which betrayed Him."

In Justin Martyr's First Apology (c. 39) we view the Twelve as a quite unhistorical group for the Christians of the time of Marcus Aurelius: "For from Jerusalem there went out into the world men, twelve in number, *and these illiterate*, of no ability in speaking: but by the power of God they proclaimed to every race of men that they were sent by Christ to teach to all the word of God." In a later chapter of the same document (c. 66) we read that "the apostles, *in the memoirs composed by them*, which we called Gospels, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them" as to the Sacrament—declared by Justin to have been by evil daemons "imitated in the mysteries of Mithras," which were prior. And here, too, there is no trace of the Judas story.

IV.—The Evangel Myth

Thus also is dismissed the gospel mystification of the intangible Evangel. When we ask, What was the gospel preached by the Twelve (including Judas) when they were sent forth by

the Master? there is no answer save that it was the bare proclamation of the speedy coming of the Kingdom of God, which had been already, according to the records, the gospel of John the Baptist and *his* "disciples." Jesus, then, on the face of the records, had nothing to teach his disciples in the way of an evangel save that formula—that, and the art of "casting out devils," and the stress on "Repent." For the meaning of the parables was expressly to be withheld from the populace, who were unable to understand them.

Thus the staggering conception of an ethical teacher indoctrinating his disciple with sublime lore, and then callously watching him sell his soul to Satan, is dismissed once for all. There were no Twelve Jesuine Apostles; there was no preaching of a gospel by them; there was no training of Judas; there was no betrayal. All that, at least, is myth.

The new problems opened up by the myth theory, indeed, are manifold; and there is room for a hypothesis that the sacramental cult which must have been one of the primary elements involved a sacramental meal of Twelve, with a ritual representative of the sacrificial God, after the manner of the traditional Sacrament of Twelve in which Aaron, the Anointed (= Messiah), and the (twelve) elders of Israel "ate bread with Moses' father-in-law before God" (Exod. xviii, 12). A sacramental meal of twelve, with a president, seems to belong also to the practice of the Jewish Temple; and the mystic and mythic figure of Melchisedek, "King of Peace," accepted by early Christians as a type of Jesus, is also associated with a sacrament of bread and wine. It may have been that in an early cult of a Jesus-God analogous to Adonis and

Osiris twelve celebrants were known as "Brothers of the Lord," before the official cult of the gospels and Acts was set up on the basis of a story of resurrection and Messiahship. But that remains matter of speculation.

What we are entitled to infer from the general history, as against gospels which are visibly compiled for purposes of edification, is that there *was* a ritual cult in which a sacrosanct personage was celebrated in the fashion of the sacramental cults which were so common among the pagans, and which we know to have subsisted among the Semites.[1] If there is one principle upon which mythologists were agreed before there arose the question of applying their principles to Christianity, it is that "the ritual is older than the myth." That is to say, wherever a story of a divine personage is related as the origin of a rite, the story is an invention to account for the rite, of which the origins are for the worshippers prehistoric. This is a warranted induction from the whole mass of mythological lore, and from the fact that all ancient histories of States and institutions begin with myths in the same fashion.

If eminent anthropologists, who have actually affirmed this principle, renounce it when they come to the Christ cultus, it is their own affair. The scrupulous scientific student of the past must adhere to established scientific principles where they are plainly applicable. The entire aspect of the gospel records, especially where they allege a systematic evangelization during the life of the God-Man, forbids any rational belief in any such

[1] It should be stated here that this view is not accepted by all exponents of the myth theory.

procedure. The very institution of the Christian Twelve Apostles we have seen to be an invention, arising on a Jewish documentary basis. The story of the Mission of the Twelve is thus already cancelled; but its falsity is made plain by the documents themselves.

It is specially significant that in the first gospel the story of the sending-out of the twelve (immediately after the "calling") is so heedless an insertion that there is no mention of their return; and after a chapter in which Jesus deals with John we find him walking in the fields with them—they "hungry" as aforesaid; with no word of record of their experience between. That experience is put by Mark (vi, 12, 13) in two bald sentences: "And they went out, and preached that men should repent. And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them." That such a record should pass with instructed men as history, and should be stressed in our own day by clerical scholars as coming from an "eye-witness"—to wit, Peter—is a sufficient reminder of the distance to be covered before the gospel story is generally subjected to rational study.

Luke, in turn, is content with one sentence: "And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing everywhere." But in this avowedly late gospel we have next the story (c. x), absent from the others, of a sending-out of seventy more disciples, with the same set of commands, and a special instruction as to entering the houses of the friendly, "eating and drinking such things as they give." And the seventy do make a report: "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name."

This is of course no evidence for anything. The story of the seventy is rejected even by orthodox scholars as an invention (for more radical critics, a "Paulinizing" invention) to establish a *Gentile* mission by the Founder, "seventy" or "seventy-two" being for Jews the accepted number of "the nations," and possibly of a subsidiary body of tribute-collectors employed by the High Priest. That the sending-out of the mass-mission should be a historical fact, and yet have been overlooked by the other synoptics, is a proposition recoiled from even by the vowed enemies of the myth theory. And yet a very little play of critical reflection will enable any one, not committed to the tradition, to realize that the story of the Sending-out of the Twelve is equally unhistorical. It is an unrelated insertion in Matthew, where there is no hint of either return or report; and the bald report in Mark, visibly an afterthought of a redactor, is in itself a confession of non-knowledge. The entire record is absolutely "in the air."

The Sending-out of the Apostles, in short, is but an earlier example, on a larger scale, of the documentary procedure with regard to the Judas story. It has been imposed on a gospel which originally lacked it, and which, in its earliest form, must have lacked even the mention of the Twelve. Thus the record decomposes, piece by piece.

We are compelled to infer that in their earlier form the first and second gospels had no mention of Twelve Apostles; and that only some time after that item had been imposed on the record was there superadded the narrative of the treason of Judas, seeing that alike in Matthew, Mark, and Luke it bears specific marks of interpolation. But the sending forth of the twelve to preach the

evangel is also a late interpolation. Its introduction in Mark is in a different context from that in Matthew, where it is made to follow immediately on the "calling." In Mark, where the calling (iii, 13) takes place on "the mountain," we have that additional mythological detail, telling of a later symbolism; but the mission is inserted later (vi, 6*b*–13), in a fashion that proclaims either interpolation or an improvement by Mark on the other narratives:—

> And he went about the village teaching. And he *called unto him the twelve*, and began to send them forth two by two.....And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.

If this could be regarded as an original passage in Mark, it would alone suffice to rebut the Neo-Unitarian assumption that that is the earliest gospel. The closing sentence of the passage rounds off the episode, where Matthew leaves it without any close. Had Matthew copied Mark, such an item could not have been ignored. But, curtailing as it does the story of the address to the Apostles in Matthew, it is evidently superimposed on Mark, thrust in with a minimum of concern for verisimilitude in the introduction.

It is only on the myth theory that the phenomena are at all intelligible. The story of the Mission in Matthew, like the whole apparatus of the Twelve, is part of the Judaizing propaganda which claimed pre-eminence for the original Judaic section of the Church. The myth of the Twelve comes first. Later comes the story of the Mission, claiming anew a primary divine status for the Judaic section. In Mark, which, however and whenever first composed, is Gentilist and not Judaist, all the Judaistic elements in the instructions

to the twelve are omitted. In Luke the Paulinizing purpose is carried out in this connection by the further invention of the Mission of the Seventy, a counter-stroke to the Mission of the Twelve.

It is at a later stage still, when the Gentilizing Mystery-play has been added to the synoptics, that the special impeachments of Judas and Peter sway the balance still further on the Gentilizing side. By this time the surviving Gospels, with Luke in currency, are predominantly "Catholic," though the Judaic nationalism of the teaching in Matthew cannot be got rid of. "Luke's" story of the Herod trial, added to the others, throws the guilt of the execution of Jesus decisively on Jewry, with *no* concern for the resulting theological problem, specially raised by the story of Jesus, as to how that is to be counted an evil act which, on the "Catholic" view, accomplishes the salvation of mankind.

Among the incidental problems is that of the probable date of the impeachment of the whole twelve: "Then all the disciples left him and fled" (Mt. xxvi, 56*b*): a momentous clause affixed to another with which it has no congruity. It must be supposed to have been inserted later than the story which makes Peter follow Jesus to "the court," but significantly sets up confusion by placing him both "within" and "without." In Mark (xiv, 50) the statement is briefer, but still incriminatory: in Luke, curiously, it is absent, as if the compiler, or the redactors, shrank from that wholesale inculpation. The inference would seem to be that the Paulinizing tendency in Luke, as in the Acts, is partly controlled by a spirit of accommodation; and that this, which was overruled at points by the later insertion of the stories of the

betrayal and of Peter's denial, was left unchecked in the matter of the non-mention of the flight of the eleven.

In the fourth gospel also that imputation is absent, "another disciple" being there specified as having accompanied Peter to the palace of the high priest. But there too, it is important to note, the story of Peter's denial (xviii, 25–7) is a late insertion. Verse 24 runs: "Annas *therefore* sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest"; and verse 28: "They lead Jesus *therefore* from Caiaphas into the palace." Here, in the last gospel of all, the story of the denial figures as a late addition. This conclusion, long since propounded as part of the myth theory, has latterly been put as an unquestionable textual fact by Dr. Rudolf Bultmann,[1] Professor of Theology at Giessen (now at Marburg), apart from any discussion of the myth theory. There is thus no critical escape from the conclusion we have reached on that particular issue. The story of the denial appears to be even later than that of the betrayal.

Thus far, we are led to the inference that in their earlier form the gospels had not only no Betrayal story and no Denial story, but no story or list of Twelve Apostles, and, *a fortiori*, no story of a Mission of the Twelve. They must then have set forth, whether with or without the Birth story, a Jesus who appealed to belief either as a Teacher or as a Wonder-Worker. Is one of these, then, a residual historical fact?

[1] *Die Geschichte der Synoptischen Tradition*, 1921, pp. 162, 163.

Part III

THE MYTH OF THE TEACHING

I.—The Silence of the Epistles

When, leaving the Gospels and Acts, we read quite independently the remaining books of the New Testament (a thing never done by the orthodox, and never with due reflection by the biographical school) we find ourselves in presence of a cult resting on two main beliefs: the prediction in the Old Testament of the coming of the Christ, and the effect of his blood-sacrifice in procuring salvation and eternal life for and through Jews.

That is the burden of the Epistles to the Hebrews and to the Romans, of the "Petrine" epistles, and of the book of Revelation. These documents are in the main specifically Judæo-Christian; and when we find in Revelation, first, a series of attacks (ii, 2, 9; iii, 9) which can rationally be interpreted only as directed against Paulinizing or Gentilizing missionaries and their converts in Asia Minor; and, later, sets of passages (vii, 1–8; xxi, 10–14) specifying the salvation of selected Israelites or (xvi, 1–4) "sealed" male ascetics, interspersed with one or two passages (vii, 9–17; xiv, 6–7) extending the salvation to all nations, and so making the sealing useless, we realize that, just as in the gospels we find a Judaic gospel of salvation overlaid with Gentilizing propaganda, there has been some Gentilizing manipulation here. The passages vii,

9–17, and xiv, 6–7, are plain interpolations on the preceding text, and half-hearted at that.

When we say "on the preceding text," we are not granting that that was a unitary document.[1] The more strictly the Apocalypse is scrutinized the more clearly emerges the fact that even the Judaic matter which, as regards the Christian evolution, is primary, is but an adaptation to Judaic purposes of a mass of older matter, in part clearly traceable to Babylonian sources. Babylonian astrology and sun-myth and angel-lore are plainly present in matter which has passed, till about a century ago, as divinely inspired mysticism about the Virgin Mary and her child Jesus. But for the restricted purpose of the present inquiry it is sufficient to note that "Revelation" was a Judaic book, manipulated first by Judaic Christians, and partly manipulated after them by Gentilizing Christians. If its "Twelve Apostles" are Christian, they are first Judaic-Christian, and it is a reasonable hypothesis that the whole construction is partly derivative from the eschatological doctrine expounded in the "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs" a century before the Christian era.

The basis is thus Judaic; and the Epistle of James, a visibly Judaic document with some Jesuine interpolations (as "Our Lord *Jesus Christ of glory*"), is not even touched with the doctrines of blood sacrifice and salvation by faith, the latter of which it expressly repels. Hence it was that Luther called it "an epistle of straw." In the "Pauline" epistles we have the Gentilizing propaganda exhibited in conflict with the Judaizing. Whether

[1] As to this problem, see the relative section in Professor Van Eysinga's *La littérature Chrétienne primitive*, 1926.

genuine or invented to deal with an actual situation, they prove a keen conflict between a Hebraic Christism, which insists on the Mosaic law in the matter of circumcision, and an innovating movement which protests that circumcision has nothing to do with the gospel of Christ.

But in one great negative aspect all of those Judaizing and Gentilizing documents agree: they show no knowledge of the "personality" of the gospel Jesus, or of the multifarious body of teaching which the gospels put in Jesus' mouth. They do not once mention even the title "Son of Man," which is used scores of times in the gospels, though only once in the Acts. There is no reason to suppose that the writers had ever heard of Jesus as being so described, whether by himself or others.

The Petrine epistles, we know, are generally regarded by critical scholars as spurious; and the second as not even by the author of the first; the former being commonly dated between 112–140 C.E., and the second about 175. As to the authenticity of the Paulines there is an unending debate. But the outstanding fact remains that, whether genuine or not, they are silent as to any human life, or characteristics, or teaching of Jesus. Even when doctrines corresponding to some in the Sermon on the Mount are put forward, nothing is said of their derivation from the gospels. Thus the exhortations at the end of the twelfth chapter of Romans, some of which are nearly identical with passages in the Sermon on the Mount, are put without any suggestion that Jesus so taught. Precisely where we should expect that the epistle would dwell on its teaching as coming from his mouth, he is neither named nor thought of. The Pauline text claiming

the Lord's word for the principle that they who preach the gospel should live by the gospel is flagrantly late, proceeding upon a gospel interpolation. To suppose that it is primary is to draw the most cynical of all possible inferences.

Exception may be claimed to occur (1) in the passage in I Peter, ii, 21–23, where the recipients are told that Christ "suffered for you, leaving an example for you, that ye should follow his steps, who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed himself[1] to him that judges righteously"; and again (2) in Paul's allusion to "the meekness and gentleness of Christ" in Second Corinthians, x, 1. But all this is intelligible as a tradition apart from and prior to the gospels. It implies, in fact, total ignorance of the large amount of vehement denunciation of Scribes and Pharisees by the gospel Jesus—a feature much more prominent, for the critical reader, than any show of meekness and gentleness. That is indeed claimed *by* the Teacher for himself in one text (Mt. xi, 29); but the very nature of the claim has moved many exegetes to doubt its authenticity.

Incidentally we have to note that these passages in the epistles offer no hint of the betrayal by Judas. Further, the Petrine writer goes on to say that Jesus "himself bore aloft[2] our sins in his body on the tree"—an old conception of human sacrifice, with no mention of the cross.[3] We are not in the atmosphere of the gospels; and certainly not in

[1] *παρεδίδου*—"surrendered"—the verb so often used in passages rendered as telling of betrayal.

[2] See margin of R.V.

[3] Compare Acts v, 30; x, 39; xiii, 29.

that of any Teaching. We are told simply what Jesus did *not* do.

It may be argued that in such a document as First Peter, composed with a leaning to the Jewish side and professedly addressed to Jewish Christians, though not anti-Pauline, it would be natural to suppress the fact that the gospel Jesus said many virulent things against the Pharisees. But why should the epistle-writers invariably abstain from quoting the words of the Master if they were in currency? The first resort to this course is that which we meet with in the 'Teaching of the Twelve Apostles,' after it has undergone Christian development. While Christian scholars believed that the Epistles were all written before the composition of the gospels, the problem might not obtrude itself, though on the orthodox view the apostles must be held to have known what Jesus taught. But when critical scholars are forced to assign late dates to many if not most of the Epistles, the question becomes pressing. The constant assumption of the antagonists of the myth theory is that a great Teacher, a great Personality, *must* have operated to gain the ear of men to the Christian teaching. In point of fact, we see the propaganda being carried on far into the second century without a sign of any knowledge of, or any interest in, any teaching Personality whatever.

The silence is so complete that never once in the whole epistolary literature, or in the Apocalypse, do we find applied to Jesus either of the gospel descriptive terms Nazarene or Nazirite,[1] or the description "of Nazareth"—a thing habitually ignored or unobserved by Christian writers, but

[1] *Nazoraios* or *Nazaraios* in the Greek.

very strange indeed if we are to suppose that the gospel Jesus had been commonly so described. Equally noteworthy is the non-mention of the parents assigned to him in the gospels.

Champions of the biographical school, such as the late Dr. Conybeare, have insisted that the names of those parents were known from the first. For this there is no documentary support in Mark, claimed by the assertor as the primary narrative. Joseph is never there mentioned, and Mary is named only in passages which leave her relation to Jesus undecipherable. Save for the delusive mention of "Brethren of the Lord" in First Corinthians, ix, 5, and the phrase "born of a woman" in Galatians, iv, 4, there is in the Epistles no suggestion that the Christ had earthly kith or kin. Their whole drift is away from any such conception. As in the Epistle to the Hebrews, he is presented as the Son of God, as "our Lord," as "the Lord of glory." The passage in Second Corinthians, v, 16: "*even* though we have known Christ after the flesh, *yet now we know* (*him so*) *no more*," gives less than no help to the biographical claim. If Jesus "suffered" at all, it had to be "in the flesh"; but the epistolist will go no further. The passage is purposely vague; and T. S. Green translates it "if we even have come to know Christ *as to flesh*,"[1] recognizing its equivocal character. Its writer can have had no certitude as to an actual human Jesus.

When then we note that the writer or writers of the Epistles of John complain bitterly of heretics who deny that Christ has come "in the flesh," it

[1] Sharpe translates: "though we once acknowledged a Christ after the flesh, yet now we acknowledge such no longer."

becomes doubly astonishing that no attempt is made to prove his earthly parentage. For the critical scholars, the Johannine epistles are late. Professor Schmiedel, dating the Fourth Gospel after 132 C.E., puts the first Epistle between that and the year 140;[1] balancing between the views that the second and third epistles are later,[2] or earlier,[3] than the first. There is certainly no external trace of any of them till after 140. And still, late as they are, they give Jesus neither a local habitation nor an earthly parentage, or even a following of Twelve Disciples.

Even in the Acts, where (save in x, 38—a redacted passage) Jesus is "the Nazirite" (*Nazoraios*, mis-rendered "of Nazareth" in A. V. and R. V.) and Peter is made to call him "a man," as would be expedient in Jerusalem, he is "a man shewn plainly forth from God to you by miracles and marvels and signs," never "a man who captivated you by his Teaching." "This Jesus God raised again, of which all we are witnesses." That is the evangel. Even in purposive fiction there is no suggestion of a Personality expressed in remembered Teaching.

In fine, outside of the gospels the New Testament has nothing to tell of a Teaching Jesus, and nothing of a personality recognized as human, save in one presentment of him as an unresisting sufferer—the conception *required* for the doctrine that he was the prophetic "Suffering Servant" who became the saving sacrifice; and actually *given* in the "Messianic" chapter of Isaiah (liii, 7) on which the Christian theory was founded: the very stuff of myth.

[1] *Encyc. Biblica*, col. 2558. [2] *Id.*, col. 2561.
[3] *The Johannine Writings*, Eng. tr. 1908, pp. 215–17.

II.—The Special Teaching in the Gospels

The latest "biographer" of the gospel Jesus writes[1] that the "notable gap" between the retirement of Jesus and his remnant of faithful disciples from Jewish into heathen territory "may fitly be filled by a sketch—of necessity brief—of that aspect of the Lord's activity which, from His day to ours, has never ceased to shape men's lives and aspirations—viz., His imperishable work as a Teacher."

We have just seen that for more than a hundred years after the date assigned for Jesus' death the early literature of the movement, from the Judaic Apocalypse to Second Peter, presents absolutely no sign of any such preoccupation among Christian writers. The Teaching of Jesus is the one thing they never mention in regard to him. He is "the Lord"; he is also a Sufferer and a Sacrifice; a Teacher he is not.

And this is thoroughly in keeping with the fact that the Epistles, like the Gospels, are steeped in the Jewish atmosphere of "eschatology," the doctrine of "the last things," the belief in the speedy coming of the end of the world, in which the Christ is to play the part of Redeemer of all who have put their faith in him. So obvious is this preoccupation that modern Neo-Unitarians, as we have seen, are divided between the internecine solutions that Jesus was a moral teacher who had *not* figured as a Messiah, and that he was an "eschatological" Messiah who propounded only an "interim ethic" for a world that is soon to be

[1] Dr. Warschauer, *The Historical Life of Christ*, p. 167.

finished. Of that vital conflict there can be no solution by way of any re-interpretation of the gospels as substantially records of a real life. The problem can be solved only by a study of the gospels as the factitious documents we have already seen them to be.

Conflicting Teachings.—Long ago considerate churchmen began to be exercised no less by the conflict of doctrines in the gospels than by the conflict of narratives. Here was a Teacher who orders his disciples not to go into any city of the Gentiles or the Samaritans, yet declares even in Matthew (viii, 11–12) that many Gentiles shall enter the kingdom of heaven while "the children of the kingdom shall be cast forth into the outer darkness." In one connection he declares that every jot and tittle of the law must be fulfilled; in another he combats Sabbatarianism.

Even more profoundly perplexing is the unbridged and unbridgeable chasm between the exhortation to the faithful to pray little, and in one simple form, and the accounts of the Teacher as spending whole nights in prayer, and as having his gospel proclaimed by disciples who "continued stedfastly.....in prayers." As great is the contradiction between the self-stultifying claim, "I am meek and lowly in heart," put in the mouth of the utterer of so many invectives, and that other claim, "A greater than Solomon is here."

Everywhere and always we are being arrested by incongruities of action and of doctrine. The gospel Jesus addresses a great multitude in parables; and when the multitude are gone he tells his disciples that they alone understand the mysteries, while parables are addressed to the multitude "that seeing they may see, and not perceive, and hearing

they may hear and not understand ; *lest haply they should turn again and it should be forgiven them*."

Composite Teaching.—Of such contradictions, and moral anomalies worse than contradictions, the only rational explanation is that they come from different hands—from gospel-makers or interpolators who have doctrines of their own to which they desire to give Dominical status. No unifiable conception of a real teacher can be drawn from them. It is only in the Sermon on the Mount that we get a fairly coherent ethical teaching, and that teaching is (1) already current Judaic lore;[1] (2) obviously compiled by collectors of such lore ; (3) certainly not a Sermon at all ; (4) such a packed series of apophthegms as could not have been reported or memorized at one hearing ; (5) absent for the most part from the other gospels.

Why is it thus absent? It is difficult to frame any tolerable explanation short of the inference that it is incorporated late in the first gospel ; since the ignoring of such a mass of teaching by the others is unintelligible unless we are to suppose that their compilers either knew it to be Judaic or objected to much of it. If "Mark" be, as Dr. Hermann Raschke argues, really the edited gospel of Marcion, the ignoring of the Sermon there may be purposive. On either view we are so much the further from the assumption that Jesus figured primarily as a Teacher.

On the other hand it is easy to conceive, in view of the Didachê, how the promoters of the early Jesuine movement felt the necessity of imposing a body of ethical doctrine on early collec-

[1] See details in *Christianity and Mythology*, 2nd ed., Part III, Second Division, § 6.

tions of cryptic or fantastic *Logia* such as we may infer, from the testimony of Papias and from the modern discoveries of non-canonical fragments of *Logia* in Egypt, were the "Sayings of Jesus" first put in currency as "gospel." The 'Teaching of the Twelve Apostles' had put moral doctrine in its forefront. To leave Jesuine moral doctrine to that manual would be to confess didactic bankruptcy. Without moral doctrine, stories of the Infancy and of miracles could appeal only to the most simple-minded. Where men could read, something better was called for. The possession of Sacred Books was the great asset of the Jewish religion as against all others. The Christian Church, in competition with the synagogue, was necessitated to have them.

And in the world of partially-Hellenized Jewry such matter was readily producible. It was all already current, between the Septuagint, the non-canonical literature, and the lore of the schools, where the greater Rabbis must have been appreciated by many as they deserved. It is customary, indeed, to assert that on the literary side—apart from refinements of Greek style—the gospel allocutions and parables are unmatchable in previous literature. Uncritical champions of tradition pronounce that the gospel parables make an impression never felt before or since. It is not thus that Canon Charles, the most competent of our experts in that field, speaks of the Jewish literature intermediate between the Old Testament, with its Apocrypha, and the New. Rather he finds a variety of matter which, in his view, must have been assimilated by Jesus. It is not critical rectitude, on the other hand, that dwells on the impressiveness of the parables in face of the con-

clusion come to by so many scholars that some of "the best" of the parables are among the latest additions to the gospels, and certainly post-Jesuine.

It is indeed a curious result of pre-supposition that writers who expressly claim a lifting and deepening effect for the teaching and personality of the Founder cannot even conceive that that influence could be adequate to the production of impressive teaching by others in the Founder's name!

But that is how, in general, presupposition always works. One series of apologists tacitly relieve the Founder of teachings which they find to be embarrassing; another set refuse to believe that any one else could have produced teaching that is quite acceptable. And we must not severely denounce these spontaneous chicaneries of the theological schools; since it is on record that the most staggering sample of fallacy in that connection comes first from the pen of John Stuart Mill, though it is adopted by Dean Inge.

For it was Mill who confidently argued[1] that the better parts of the gospels *could not* have been invented by Galilean fishermen (a suggestion which no scholar had ever made), by way of enforcing the belief that they *had been* invented by a Galilean carpenter. Mill is simply taking for granted the proposition that needed to be proved. He had made up his mind in advance, without any comparative study of pre-Christian ethical lore, that (*a*) the ethic of the gospels is original and remarkable, and (*b*) *therefore* must have come from Jesus the Galilean carpenter. Whether it could have come from literate compilers of Jewish ethical lore he never even inquired. The immense diffi-

[1] *Three Essays on Religion*, pp. 253–4.

culties in the way of a critical belief in the unity of the gospel teachings he never even perceived, and consequently never explored.

Had he done these things, he could not have penned his further argument to the effect that (1) the fourth gospel *was* the work of a disciple; that (2) it "imported matter from Philo and the Alexandrian Platonists"; and that (3) "the East was full of men who could have stolen any quantity of this poor stuff." Here Mill was unpleasantly disturbing the popular consensus of sentiment. The "poor stuff" in question was and is for many Christian scholars, even among those who confess the non-historicity of the document, very superior matter indeed, possible only to a writer of culture and philosophic depth. Nay, for Matthew Arnold, as for his father before him, the fourth gospel had a quite special historical, moral, and literary value. He was settling the problem in terms of *his* partialities and presuppositions, as was Mill on the other side. And both alike were blind to the real possibilities of the case.[1]

But what Arnold did has been and is being done since his time. B. Weiss twenty years ago declared for the historicity of the fourth gospel. While most of the historicists respectfully set it aside as being rather an edifying than a historical document, clerics, not unscholarly, however uncritical, are now confidently contending that it "is a faithful mirror of the time of Jesus," that it is somehow really "historical," and that it makes, in fact, the most ineffable "impression" of all.[2] And

[1] See *Christianity and Mythology*, Pt. III, Second Div., § 12.

[2] See the Rev. Dr. C. F. Nolloth's *The Fourth Evangelist*, 1925, p. 171 and *passim*. This work is an excellent sample of the scholarly operation of the "will to believe."

why should they not so argue? If they are told that John is inconsistent with the synoptics, they can answer that the synoptics are often inconsistent with each other, and with themselves. Why then strain at the fourth and swallow the other three? The position of those who stand on the synoptics and put aside the fourth gospel is undermined in advance.

What the unknown author of the fourth gospel did in the way of assimilating mystical ideas from Alexandrian Platonism, other unknown authors could, and, as we are forced to infer, did accomplish in the way of collecting and colligating the abundant ethical and eschatological lore of the canonical and post-canonical religious literature of the Jews. To call the collection in the Sermon on the Mount "original" is to say the thing which is not.[1] Even in Mill's day the contrary had been shown by competent scholars, and he gave them no heed. That some of the parables were "original" when first inserted in one or other of the gospels may well be true; but no candid student can deny that the most attractive are plainly late additions, not attributable to the gospel Jesus.[2]

And here we are face to face with that fatality of a forced choice between contradictions which is the Nemesis of all unsound belief. The champions of the doctrine of a "unique personality" constantly assure us that the personality in question had the effect of raising the moral levels of life once for all in the world in which he taught. Yet the moment

[1] Mr. Middleton Murry (*Life of Jesus*, pref.) cites an English bishop who avows that "Jesus added nothing to human thought." Mr. Murry is scandalized; but the Bishop doubtless went on to explain away his avowal, as do so many others.

[2] See *Christianity and Mythology*, Pt. III, Second Div., § 11.

it is suggested that the influence could include the creative activity of new minds in the service of the new cause, we are angrily told that such a thing is impossible.

Even Mill becomes heated when swelling the chorus. Later theologians, indignant at the assertion that even the parable of the Good Samaritan is not the highest flight of ancient ethics, meet it by an arrogant challenge to produce anything to compare with that. The very purpose of the parable is to suggest to Jews that a Samaritan may be a better man than they; and the champions proceeded to argue that only one man, a Jew, could imagine such a Samaritan! It is charitable to assume that they were entirely ignorant of the story of Lycurgus forgiving and reforming the brutal young aristocrat who had destroyed his eye, and, instead of putting him to death as the citizens invited him to do, brought him back to them after a month with the words: "You gave me a bad citizen: I give you back a good one." For if the angry theologians should deny that that is a still finer story than the tale of the Good Samaritan, they would reveal that their moral appreciation is no wider than their scholarship.

That story of Lycurgus—which like the other is probably a "parable" and not a historical record—is one of the evidences, to which modern Christian scholars are so strangely blind, of the possibility of good ethical thinking and high parabolic art among nameless men in a world in which the commonest method of conveying new doctrine was to ascribe it to some distinguished name. There are many attractive tales and parables in the Old Testament, products of Eastern "haggadic" art, to which no scholar can pretend to attach the name of any

author. The stories in Genesis are no longer believed by educated men to be the work of "Moses." The books of Job and Ruth can be assigned to no author. And those two fictitious books, as it happens, abound in the literary "realism" which ingenuous scholars declare to be a proof of the special historicity of "Mark"—this in the face of the much more marked realism of certain episodes in "John."

What Eastern haggadic art could do for various purposes in the books of the Old Testament canon, and in the extensive Jewish post-canonical literature, it could do for the new Christian movement in the second century "after Christ," when the old humanist activities were being driven into that and other new channels under the heavy hand of imperial Rome, which had everywhere made an end of the relatively free municipal life and strife in virtue of which Greece and Asia Minor had been for centuries a scene of unmatched intellectual as well as political activity. In that manifold Eastern world Semitic and Hellenistic thought and literature met and reacted on each other. The post-exilic emergence of new ethical thought in Jewry is inferably a matter of penetration from outside. Christian scholars have repeatedly insisted on the testimony of the Book of Acts as to the continuous presence of "Hellenistic" elements even in the Church at Jerusalem. Why can they not realize that among these and the other Gentile elements specified as present in the life of Jerusalem, to say nothing of what may have been done at Antioch, there were likely to be men capable of developing ethical doctrine for the new religion? And when the movement had been diffused not only through Asia Minor and the Isles but in Egypt and in

Italy, what more likely than that some men of education connected with the Church should take further part in both the narrative and the didactic accretions to the gospels?

Even the scholars who are sworn to prove the historicity of Jesus, one would suppose, would be glad to recognize the interpolated character of the stories of the Betrayal by Judas, the Denial by Peter, and the supernatural slaughter of Ananias and Sapphira. If their slavery to unanalysed documents withholds them even from that amount of new perception, their case is hard indeed. If, on the other hand, they recognize, as so many of them do, the external character of passages such as the predictions of the Fall of Jerusalem, the lyrico-mystical "Come unto me," and the "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem," as well as the lateness of a number of the parables, how can they consistently refuse to contemplate the inference that the main mass of the ethical matter, and in particular the clearly literary and non-oral composition of the Sermon, tell of a multitude of hands?

But there is nothing so obstructive to historic or scientific vision as a presupposition. Men who have been nourished on the Greek classics, who have read in Euripides the song of Hippolytus to Artemis, who know alike from Theocritus and from Ezekiel how for ages the women of old "wept for Tammuz," who have read their Homer and their Æschylus, who know the tale of "outworn Demeter, searching for Persephone"—all the record of the infinitely various beliefs which through thousands of years whole races cherished concerning imaginary Gods and Goddesses—are yet professedly assured that there *must* have been a marvellous historic Christ to account for the Christian creed.

Yet the most careful study by the most devoted professional students does but confirm the critical inference that the teachings in the gospels are supererogatory to the primary movement. The gist of Professor Schmiedel's survey[1] stands thus:—

"The context in which we now find the sayings of Jesus must never.....be taken as a trustworthy guide in determining what the original meaning may have been. In every case the context tells us only what the evangelists, or their predecessors, found it to mean; indeed in many cases it is impossible to believe that even for them the place where they introduce the saying is intended to convey any hint as to the meaning. A source like the *logia*[2] laid naturally very little stress upon this point. *The greater number of the utterances of Jesus are like erratic blocks.* All that one sees with perfect clearness is that *they do not originally belong to the place where they are now found.*"

Professor Schmiedel, of course, has his own carefully stated grounds for regarding the gospels as broadly historical; but even he appears to fail to see the just, or reasonable, inferences from his own avowals. And where he fails the ordinary run of defenders of the faith have still less suspicion of the historical possibilities of the case, and are incomparably more uncritical in their attitude to it.

To this day, men are endlessly occupied in finding justifications for "faith," proofs of its salvatory functions, encomiums for its supposed power of illumination. And to this day, perhaps, few have realized its main function in human life, which is the paralysing of the thinking reason. This is not a matter of merely religious belief; that is but the predominant form, the largest illustration of the process. It is a process arising in every department of mental life, from the dominion of

[1] *Encyclopædia Biblica*, art. GOSPELS, col. 1886.

[2] The inferred collections of "dicta" which had been circulated separately.

"rule of thumb" in the simplest of routine activities to the anchylosis of critical judgment in the most general operations of judgment. Faith is but the static attitude, the assumption, whether fervid or stolid, that we know all about the matter in hand, when the least stir of sober doubt would reveal that we do not.

Thus it is that, for most men, scholarly or otherwise, the immeasurable discussion of religion and Bible, God and Jesus, has left them blind to the two highly significant and highly interesting facts that alike the Judaic and the Christian religions (to name no other) are products of human collaboration. They speak of the greatness of "the Book" without realizing the simple outstanding fact that the Bible is a colligation of two literatures, such as might be made by collecting in two "books" the literatures of Greece and Rome. And, seeing without perceiving the concrete documentary phenomenon, they entirely miss the sociological phenomenon, the social potency of combinate effect in literature.

Men who, ethically moved, declaim with conviction about the value of organization and "team-work" in life, never reach the conception of "team-work" in the gospels. And yet the gospels are really the outstanding example of "team-work" in book form; even as the rise and duration of the Christian system is the outstanding instance in sociology of the persisting power of organization as against the chance life of isolated effort and movement. Relatively sane heresies have perished; insane dogmas have subsisted. What prevents emotional and professional people from seeing these things is just the presupposition of a Great Personality.

Rousseau, facing the problem with all the certitude of ignorance, before even Astruc's thesis of the composition of the Pentateuch (1753) had met with any intelligent study, declaimed that "it would be more inconceivable that four men in accord had fabricated this book than that one alone should have furnished the matter.[1] Never had Jewish writers found either this tone or this morality; and the gospel has characters of truth so great, so striking, so perfectly inimitable that the inventor of it would have been more astonishing than the hero."[2]

The theorem is at once false in fact, false in dialectic, and false to the whole previous argumentation of the *Profession du foi du vicaire Savoyard* in which it occurs. The gospels are the work of many more than four hands; they are emphatically *not* "in accord"; they *do* copy the words of many previous Jewish writers who *had* found "this tone and this morality," and of Greek writers who had done so likewise; there is at work, for the most part, not "invention" but compilation; and there is nothing "astonishing" in it all for any one who knows the relevant previous literature, Jewish and Pagan.

Yet we find a Jewish scholar[3] to-day who, falsely implying that Rousseau was discussing the *historicity* of Jesus, which was not then in question,[4] and eliding the statement as to the impos-

[1] None the less, Rousseau avows that the gospel is "full of incredible things.....which it is impossible for any sensible man to conceive or admit."

[2] *Émile*, liv. iv. *Œuvres*, ed. 1817, vi, pp. 111–12.

[3] Klausner, as cited, p. 70.

[4] Voltaire knew friends of Bolingbroke who denied the historicity of Jesus. But Rousseau does not even mention any such denial. He is discussing the originality of the teaching.

sibility of "Jewish authors" writing as one Jew is all the while alleged to have spoken, professes to find in that rhodomontade, as did his compatriot Joseph Salvador before him, "an adequate rejoinder to the conglomerate of pseudo-scientific proofs advanced" by myth theorists. All that the passage does is to stultify to the uttermost Rousseau's whole previous polemic as to the capacity of man to find his own ethic without priests or revelations. In place of all the authorities he discards he has but posited one Jewish revealer, with a monopoly of moral truth. We are listening to the ethico-literary judgments of a rhetorician who cannot conduct his own polemic without absolute self-contradiction. And this is the authority that suffices, on the whole issue of historicity, a Jewish biographer of Jesus who professes to write as a historical critic. Deep answereth unto deep.

So far from owing their measure of appeal, as distinct from their traditionary authority, to the revelation of any cogitable personality, the gospels make it in virtue of the very multiplicity and disco-ordination of their matter, the result of the free collaboration of a hundred hands; some inserting divergent ethical scrolls, some parables, others counter-parables; some historical fictions, some counter-fictions; some reports of dialectic, some apocalyptic allocutions; others, lyrical or elegiac outbursts; all interspersed with solemn old tales of miracle, all rounded off with a mystery-drama naïvely reduced to narrative form.

For millions, the battle is won with the delightful myths of the Infancy; for millions more, all turns on the condescension of Deity to appease Deity by dying as a redeeming Sacrifice for human sin. All serious attempts to expiscate a Personality do but

elicit insoluble strifes of inference and interpretation. The thesis of an all-conquering Personality is the figment of an unveridical sociology, which will not stoop to analysis. Christianity subsists, as it began, not as the rule of a Personality but as a "Going Concern." For the bulk of Christendom, the Personality is to this day adequately represented by a figure on a cross, or a feebly sentimental portrait, conforming to a fixed convention, expressing only an appeal to uncritical traditionism.

And thereby hangs the tale of the wrath of Carlyle at Holman Hunt's 'Light of the World,' rapturously acclaimed by Ruskin for its laborious symbolism, in absolute blindness to its artistic nullity. Here was faith paralysing art, exactly as it had done in ancient Egypt. Carlyle, for once made in a measure artistically percipient by his repulsion, declaimed to the unlucky painter's face, "raising his voice well nigh to a scream," his fierce derision of that "papistical fantasy," "bedizened in priestly robes and a crown, and with yon jewels on his breast and a gilt aureole around his head." For the biographer, craving lifelike portraits of his heroes, it was the worst of many failures, worse than Da Vinci's "puir, weak, girl-faced nonentity, bedecked in a fine silken sort of gown, with gems and precious stones bordering the whole." Even Albert Dürer, picturing the story of the Man of Sorrows, "had canons of tradition which hindered him from giving the full truth."[1]

Carlyle was voicing in advance the emotions of

[1] Hunt's *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, 1905, i, 352 *sq.* The passage is reproduced in vol. iv of D. A. Wilson's *Life of Carlyle*, ch. xxxv.

the present-day school who seek to create for themselves a Hero out of a disestablished God. What he wanted was a realistic face for "the noblest, the brotherliest, and the most heroic-minded Being that ever walked God's earth." How, he asked, had the crowd of ancient sculptors neglected to give it? Thus can wilful men fool themselves by pretending to validate the past of their fantasy. A clever modern French artist has done something that might have satisfied Carlyle, who in his old age took satisfaction in a 'John Knox' that was *not* John Knox, but had a beard of "practicable length." And the modernist artist is but dazzling the modernist hero-worshipper with a semblance of "reality." We shall doubtless be told that Carlyle's "impression" proves the greatness of the figure that he had created for himself, which is as cogent as would be the claim that his operatic notion of "the Man Odin" proves the historicity of the primary God of Norse mythology.

Carlyle's method with Odin is in strict fact the method of the whole body of professional and amateur theologians who in this age insist on certificating the historicity of Jesus by the strength of their feelings about him. As little as he in his heroics will they deign to face the mass of mythological science which points to the induction that the Sky-Gods are precipitates of the earliest animism of the peoples, and that the Son-Gods are just as surely precipitates of a later folklore. Even Carlyle himself could not but see that the Norse Gods are Nature-Gods; nonetheless must he have an Odin who was "a Teacher and Captain of soul and body," the deepest thinker of his time, who preached a religion of Valour, for which he was deified.

This in the very act of noting how Snorro and Saxo and Torfaeus make biography out of every myth, and reduce it all to chronology; and how "any vague rumour of number had a tendency to settle itself into Twelve." As was the audience which accepted from Carlyle the necessary historicity of Odin, with his Twelve, so is the audience which to-day choruses the minor prophets who scornfully dismiss the notion that Jesus and his Twelve can be anything but actual historical personages.

Yet not even the vast inertia of a standing faith can keep thinking theologians satisfied with the spontaneous scorn of the multitude for any suggestion that their records are but parts of a mythology. They know that the records have been crumbling under their hands for over a hundred years; and they are fain to discriminate. It is Professor Burkitt, one of the most competent and most temperate of living English theologians, who has avowed[1] that "the old orthodoxy, regarded as a fixed system, exists no longer. It is not merely that breaches have been made in the wall, or that projections which stood in the way of modern thought have been cleared away: the whole building has collapsed. Where Gibbon saw an effete and old-fashioned building, we are confronted with a heap of ruins. There are few stones one upon another that have not been thrown down; but the heap remains—what are we to make of it?"

Thus speaks the accomplished and candid scholar. Very different is the tone of the "shouting varletry" of lay and professonal publicists who think to dispose of the literature of the myth theory in the

[1] *Christian Beginnings*, 1924, p. 8.

temper and manner of Mr. Bumble. But they, among them, have ten readers for the scholar's one.

It is for the historical student, recognizing that the matter must be patiently reasoned out, to meet all this idle apriorism by the marshalled evidence of the incompatibility of the gospel records, alike as to narrative and doctrine, with any biographical hypothesis that posits a recognizable Teacher. That has in fact been shown, as we have seen, by the latest exponents of new unitary biographical theories, each in turn protesting that the rival theories are unwarranted, till a vivacious statement of the "eschatological" theory creates first a new hope and then a new alarm.

At this moment, if we can make any accurate inference from the latest output of Lives and "solutions," the process of proving the historicity of Jesus is reduced to a blank assertion that he gave a "revelation" independently of all the records which are alleged to contain it—a proposition advanced seventy years ago by M. Paul Janet, and often since repeated. Such is the thesis of the work of the Rev. Dr. Vacher Burch,[1] of Liverpool Cathedral, on 'Jesus Christ and his Revelation,' effusively dedicated to Bishop A. A. David. That work makes no attempt to rebut the proof that the gospel teachings are wholly derivative, and either pre-Jesuine or post-Jesuine. It simply flouts all the derivations as exercises in "talmudizing," and asseverates *ad nauseam* that whatever Jesus taught conveyed a "revelation" which the same teaching could not and did not convey when penned or spoken by others.

To this hardy asseveration, however, there is

[1] Cited above, p. 60.

significantly appended what is for the British public a practically new item of "Christian evidence"—to wit, the claim that the medieval "North-Russian" version of Josephus (discovered twenty years ago and not yet published in full), taken with Hegesippus, proves Josephus to have inserted in the Aramaic or Hebraic original of his 'Jewish Wars' passages about John the Baptist which justify us in believing him to have really written the passage about Jesus in the 'Antiquities.' It is hardly possible to overstate the tenuity of the argument (hereinafter examined) thus excogitated by Dr. Burch. But the very fact that such a tactic is resorted to by a polemist who proclaims the presence of a supernormal "revelation" in the gospel teachings is eloquent of the pressures of the myth theory on the ecclesiastical consciousness.

It is inconceivable, indeed, that Dr. Burch's tactics, whether declamatory or documentary, will be endorsed by the majority of serious theologians. Thus far, at least, they have staked their cause on a more comprehensive negation of the myth argument, always indeed on à priori lines, but with a professed reliance on the "historical sense" of educated men, sometimes accompanied by a more or less contemptuous characterization of that of the supporters of the myth theory. To that defence, then, we must finally address our attention.

Part IV

THE RESISTANCE TO THE MYTH THEORY

I.—Recent Activities

Goguel; Wright; Klausner; Warschauer

It would not be too much to say that during the past twenty-five years, apart from scholarly arguments on the biographical side, the direct opposition to the myth theory in its modern forms has consisted mainly in saying (1) that the Christian Church and creed *cannot* have arisen save on the historic basis of one commanding personality; (2) that no theologian of importance has accepted the myth theory; and (3) that accordingly it is "exploded." Any one capable of realizing the nature of an argument will recognize that these propositions amount to exactly nothing as rebuttals. The first simply begs the question. The second is merely a claim that theological scholars in the mass refuse to accept a theory which would prove them to have staked their careers on a delusion: which is exactly what some of the myth-theorists, at least, expected. The third is an empty appeal "to the gallery." The bulk of the matter of the gospels is actually given up by the scholars who are claimed as denying the myth theory.

Further, it is important to the student to realize that, apart from a few conscientious scholars who have attempted no detailed refutation, and who for

the most part merely frame new arguments for the historicity case, the vocal resistance to the myth theory is carried on by robustious censors who have either not studied it at all (the common case) or have only cursorily done so. The late Dr. F. C. Conybeare, who was not a mythologist, did but contemptuously misrepresent it at certain detached points, upon which he was more than fully answered. The Rev. Canon Streeter, who refers his readers to other men's alleged refutations, makes no more pretence to have studied the literature for himself than to emulate the courtesy which marks the scholars who have done so. He cannot even be credited with what he amiably assigns to some supporters of the myth theory—"superficial and second-hand knowledge." In this connection he appears to have no information whatever.

The great exception to the rule of discourtesy among those who explicitly repel the myth theory is the recent work of Professor Maurice Goguel;[1] and to him is fitly to be given the first place in this survey. It is in every way satisfactory that the defence should be undertaken by such a highly qualified scholar and such a courteous disputant. Of all the expressly defensive treatises thus far produced, his is the most—one might say, is almost alone—marked by perfect amenity of temper. Himself an "advanced" critic of the documents, he assumes no pontifical airs and feels no theological malice, contenting himself by arguing the main issues, as he sees them, in the spirit of

[1] *Jesus the Nazarene—Myth or History?* By Maurice Goguel, Doctor of Theol. and Lit. (Paris), Prof. of Exegesis and N.T. Criticism in Faculty of Free Protestant Theology (Paris). Translated by Frederick Stephens. (T. Fisher Unwin; 1926.)

historical science. We may thus congratulate ourselves on having the best that can be said for the defence at this stage of the debate; and this in a competent translation.

In one respect, indeed, Prof. Goguel's book will be found by students disappointing. Though he broadly states the myth theory, he does not in detail examine it, and indeed does not seem to have studied it. Thus in regard to the works of the present writer he has the note: "Concerning Robertson, see Schweitzer (*Gesch.*); Guignebert, p. 88." But Schweitzer avowedly does not, or can only with difficulty, read English; and he certainly had not read the works in question, of which he gives a misrepresentation too absurd to have proceeded upon any knowledge. Prof. Goguel, however, is doubtless entitled by theological usage to take the course he does, which is that of simply putting his own case for the historicity of Jesus on the basis of the disputed records, from the standpoint of the broad principles of historical evidence.

Taking this course, M. Goguel somewhat compromises his case by arguing, in an obscure paragraph (p. 29), that M. Couchoud's account of the case of Jesus as unique, and therefore an enigma for the historian, is in effect an attempt to prohibit history from "dealing with great personalities, and to exclude from its domain a Julius Cæsar, a Mahomet, a Luther, and a Napoleon, and thus to suppress one of the most important factors on human evolution." This is an *ignoratio elenchi.* The persons named are in no sense enigmatic in the way that the Gospel Jesus is. A distinguished French expert has declared to the present writer that the problem of the historicity of Jesus is insoluble, because "there are no documents"—that

is, no historical documents, properly so called. This cannot possibly be said of any of the four personages named by M. Goguel.

When he comes to the quasi-historical documents, M. Goguel is forced, as a candid scholar, to admit that there is only an inferential argument for an original mention of Jesus by Josephus; and that, if the forged passage in B. xviii of the 'Antiquities' be wholly removed, the preceding and following paragraphs "are in perfect connection with each other." Surprisingly weak, however, is his proposition (p. 47) that Josephus really kept silence on the subject of Christism because "this cult was a menace to Rome." Was Jesuism a menace at all? Was not Judaism itself much more of a menace to Rome in Palestine? The plea really amounts only to one more begging of the question as to the status of Christism when Josephus wrote. The entire defence as founded on Josephus and the Latin authors, in fact, remains in M. Goguel's hands as weak as ever; and one turns for the strength of his case to his handling of the à priori probabilities and improbabilities.

And here again, when we come to the first concrete issues, we find him in effect begging the question. Thus in regard to the problem of Jesus' three cognomina—"the Nazirite," "the Nazarene," and "of Nazareth" (all alike absent from the Epistles and the Apocalypse)—he pronounces (p. 52, *note*): "It is impossible to connect the word Nazarene with the notion of the [Jewish Nazirite] sect, *for* the Christian tradition.....has preserved a *clear memory* that Jesus was not an ascetic like John the Baptist." But the historicity of the Christian tradition is the thing in dispute! The tradition preserves *both* of the incompatible aspects.

Here emerges the tactical trouble set up by ignoring the details of the myth theory. Part of that theory is that the anti-ascetic stories are purposive attempts to deflect the cognomen from its original significance to that set up by the formula "of Nazareth." M. Goguel admits that the disciples of John the Baptist were called Nazarites, and concludes that the names "Nazarene" and "Christian" were given to the Jesuists by their opponents. Then the stronger is the case for the view that the Nazareth story and cognomen are purposive myths.

It belongs to M. Goguel's method that his attempt to account for the gospel stories of the cult of the Name of Jesus where the disciples had not been is quite unsatisfying. At times he may be partly justified (as at p. 60) in charging myth-theorists with something like question-begging, as when a term is claimed to be symbolically used (though symbolism is averred also by the historicists); but in reality the verdict that the Pauline view of Jesus "contains no historical element" is not a begging of the question, but a justifiable account of the Paulines *as documents*. So many supporters of the myth theory, again, take for granted the priority of Mark that M. Goguel is not open to special criticism for doing so; but that assumption is nevertheless an arbitrary element in the case for historicity. Like our English experts, he ignores the argument of Hermann Raschke that the Gospel of Marcion was just "Mark." And when he argues (p. 72) that before the compilation of the Gospels had begun "there existed an oral tradition *capable* of preserving the facts with remarkable fidelity," he strains the probability argument in a startling fashion.

His case is perhaps at its best when he argues,

as some distinguished rationalists have done, that the apparent absence of Jewish denial (as against the Gospels) of the historicity of Jesus is a proof thereof. This argument, as it happens, we shall find[1] absolutely destroyed by a Rabbinical scholar who nevertheless affirms the historicity of Jesus. But in this very connection M. Goguel commits a bewildering contradiction. After putting the claim on pp. 70–1, he proceeds to deal with the argument of S. Reinach from the doctrine of the Docetists, and comments (p. 78) :—

"To this theory M. Couissin *rightly* objects that the answer to the *Jewish negation* would have been without efficacy, since *the Jews denied that which the Docetists affirmed—namely, that Jesus had been seen and heard, either as an illusion or otherwise.*"

When M. Goguel thus insists that "the Jews" *did* deny that Jesus had been seen and heard, how can he also maintain that they, or some of them, did not deny the historicity of Jesus? He leaves a critical reader wholly mystified.

Hardly less unlucky is his attempted answer to M. Reinach's argument that the Epistle of Ignatius to the Philadelphians proves the historicity of Jesus to have been currently denied. The passage founded on is given thus :—

"I have heard certain men say," writes Ignatius: "If I do not find (a certain thing) in the archives, I do not believe in the Gospel. And as I replied to them: It is written (in the Old Testament) they answered: 'That is the very question.' But for me the archives are Jesus Christ, His cross, His death, His resurrection, and the faith which comes from Him."

The translation is M. Reinach's; and M. Goguel is liberal enough to write: "The text of the passage is not certain. For basis of discussion we

[1] See below, p. 138.

accept that of Reinach." For forensic purposes he had better not have done so. The passage given is rather freely reconstructed, and it comes from the "longer recension," whereas many scholars claim that only the shorter is genuine.

But if M. Reinach's reading is accepted, M. Goguel's defence is a miscarriage. He wholly misses the point, as put by M. Reinach, concerning the Old Testament testimony. It is that the opponents (whom M. Goguel strangely supposes to have denied that there *was* any Old Testament testimony) declared that very "testimony" to be destructive of belief in the historicity. "You argue," they say in effect to Ignatius, "from the prophecies. That is just the trouble. The gospel story of Jesus is apparently a mere construction *from* the prophecies. We want actual historical evidence. Where is it?"

It is hardly necessary to add that, by reason of his critical tactic, M. Goguel makes no attempt to meet the mythological argument as to the story of Barabbas. That argument is that the story in question is plainly unhistorical, as M. Loisy reluctantly admits, and is intelligible only as an attempt to dispose of a Jewish protest that the humiliated and crucified Jesus of the Gospels is visibly an elevation to independent status of the "Jesus Barabbas" of an ancient and familiar annual ritual. While such issues are ignored, M. Goguel's case remains fatally incomplete even as a *plaidoirie*.

On the other hand, M. Goguel makes some quite fatal admissions, without realizing it. Thus on p. 176 he writes that "The identification of Jesus with the paschal lamb is, in fact, current in ancient Christianity. It is very old, since it is already

found in the first Epistle to the Corinthians." The "since" is a slender foundation; but the proposition is really a capitulation to the myth theory. How should the impression of a great outstanding *teaching* Personality become at the very outset absorbed in the concept of the paschal lamb?

Again, we have (p. 208) this concession to the myth theory: "It is conceivable that the tradition of the words and sayings of Jesus may have been enriched by aphorisms or declarations which were not originally attributed to him [*e.g.* Acts xi, 16 (wrong refs. in Goguel)], but we are unable to discover with certainty any fact of this kind in the Gospel tradition. It would, moreover, only be a question of agglomeration, and would *presuppose* the existence of the Gospel tradition." Emphatically must we retort that it would *not*: it would presuppose only the existence of a number of *Logia Jesou*. Again the Professor is arguing in a circle. The myth theory posits the *previous* currency of the Jesus-name as divine, a result of an old-standing Hero-God-cult. It is part of that theory that *Logia Jesou* would be current; and, once begun, would multiply. M. Goguel does not realize the issue.

Furthermore, his plea that we cannot be sure of invented *logia* in the gospels is destroyed by a mass of critical testimony. Absolutely every progressive critic of eminence admits the non-authenticity of a number of Jesuine sayings in the gospels. But the decisive thing is the Sermon on the Mount. When it is realized that that document, in mass, is an ascription to Jesus of moral sayings that were current long before the time assigned to him, the pretence of a "previous tradition" of sayings by the gospel Jesus becomes preposterous.

Equally unhappy is M. Goguel's assertion (p. 80 *n.*) that "the *majority* of those who deny the historical character of Jesus repudiate the testimony of Paul's epistles. M. Couchoud is the sole exception." Here the Professor definitely reveals the smallness of his acquaintance with the literature of the myth theory. Neither Professor W. B. Smith nor the present writer has staked it on a general repudiation of "the testimony of Paul's Epistles." As he admits, Professor Drews argues only that certain passages (as I Cor. xi, 23) are interpolated. But so argue several professional exegetes who do not reject the historicity of Jesus. So argued the present writer before he rejected it. And, as we shall see,[1] that interpolated "testimony" is *as testimony* destroyed (even by the admission of a historicist champion) by the fact that Paul is made to profess to speak on a supernatural revelation.

In this connection M. Goguel involves himself in insuperable difficulties. Admitting that Paul's "I have received" carries that claim, he resorts here also to the illicit device of claiming that it "presupposes" a human tradition. What, then, on that view, should induce Paul to ignore the evidence in question? That the passage is a twice redacted interpolation is the one solution that clears it of the charge of sheer charlatanism. Paul, as he admits, believed in a *pre-existent* Jesus. M. Goguel thinks to clinch the argument by claiming (p. 87) that "The controversies between Paul and the Jerusalem apostles *establish* that the latter *boasted of having been witnesses of the life of Jesus*—a fact which Paul did not contest." This is pure surmise: neither the boast nor the admission is on

[1] Below, pp. 133–5.

record; and the boast, on the face of the case, would have been worthless. Many thousands, according to the gospels, had been said to be *witnesses*.

The most curious of M. Goguel's oversights is his complete non-recognition of the significance of the story of the descent of the Holy Ghost (Acts i–ii). If the apostles were really understood to have a decisive claim in respect of having "witnessed" the life and death of Jesus (whom they were declared to have forsaken in a body), why that fiction of the miracle of the Holy Ghost? To the eye of the mythologist, it is all a palpable process of fiction upon fiction. But for the historicist, what is the solution? Evidently the inventors felt that the apostolicity of the apostles needed a special sanction; and it becomes an interesting problem whether the claim of Paul or the claim of the Judaizers to the "gift of the Holy Ghost" came first. But, either way, the thesis of the admission by Paul of the "witnessing of the life of his pre-existent Jesus" goes by the board.

When, again, he advances the familiar argument from the epistolary allusions to "the brethren of the Lord," he almost entitles those of his own side to reproach him with non-recognition of the seriousness of the difficulty created by the orthodox interpretation.[1] How can we reconcile with the gospel stories of the repudiation of Jesus by all his kindred the assumption that the "brethren" of the later allusions were actually his brothers in the flesh? They do not appear in the Acts save at i, 14, where they momentarily and inexplicably appear with "the women" and Mary, all there-

[1] See the problem discussed below, p. 139 *sq.*

upon entirely disappearing from the action. When, then, did or could such brothers attain authoritative status in the cult? Only as the group title of a "fraternity" is the term comprehensible. I think I could supply M. Goguel with a better argument for his purpose than that which he employs. But he might well murmur, upon such a proffer, "*et dona ferentes*"; and as the argument would not be finally valid it had better be left unspecified.

At times, indeed, reading M. Goguel, one almost despairs of establishing with him any logical common ground, any principles of right reasoning, so surprisingly does he extract evidence from what is quite fatal to the claim he is putting. He affirms, for instance, that the Marcan text (xii, 37; also Lk. xx, 44) in which Jesus denies the Davidic descent of the theoretic Messiah is "beyond question" as to authenticity, "because the text goes directly counter to the conception of a Davidic Messiah *universally* received in the Church since Paul." One despairs of following such reasoning. It affirms (1) that Jesus *certainly* repudiated Davidic descent; (2) that Paul knew this, which must have been proclaimed by the apostles *if* the text be genuine, yet absolutely disregarded it; (3) that Paul's Davidic doctrine completely drove out the anti-Davidic doctrine alike in the Gentile and the Judaizing communities; and (4) that Mark *must* have put in writing a true saying *because* nobody accepted it!

Cannot the Professor see that the anti-Davidic *logion* is just part of the battle of fictitious testimonies between the two sections? That the anti-Davidic view is an argument put in the mouth of Jesus by a gospel-maker or an interpolator at a time when the Davidic view was *not* welcome in

Gentile-Christian circles?[1] That, in fact, it is as plainly factitious a *logion* as any in the New Testament? On his view of a "universal" pro-Davidic belief, how did Luke also come to give it? Does he seriously pretend that Luke gave *everything* he found?

Evidently it is vain to make such appeals to M. Goguel; and for that very reason his defence as a whole, despite its admirable amenity, has no weight for a reasoning student of the myth theory. He is really at the old à priori point of view when he concludes by saying that "the historical reality of the personality of Jesus alone enables us to understand the birth and development of Christianity, which otherwise would remain an enigma and, in the proper sense of the word, a miracle." The sufficient answer to such a thesis is that on M. Goguel's view the cults of Yahweh, Zeus, Athênê, Mithra, and Dionysos can never have existed at all, since nobody pretends that those deities were primarily historical personalities.

When, then, a theologian is found claiming in the *Expository Times*, after an avowal of "the persistent evasion of issues by the theologians," that "the views of Drews, W. B. Smith, and J. M. Robertson are *now* generally discredited among competent and serious investigators,"[2] we note the pronouncement as a *brutum fulmen*. The "now" is intended to deceive. No writer who accepted the myth theory would ever have been admitted by

[1] The point has a special interest in connection with the theory that Mark is the adapted gospel of Marcion. See Appendix on *The Problem of Mark*. Marcion would take the anti-Davidic view.

[2] The Rev. C. J. Wright, B.D., Penzance, art. on "Some Tendencies and Problems in Modern Theology," *Expository Times*, 1926, p. 154.

the theologian in question to be a "competent and serious investigator"; and the implied suggestion that some such did in the past accept, who now reject, is a *suggestio falsi.* "It is something," this writer goes on, "that the historicity of Jesus is accepted as a settled position among *even* the most 'advanced' historical investigators into the Gospels." The myth-theorist has but to reply that his negators in general are *not* "the most advanced historical investigators," and that Mr. Wright has not shown himself a "competent and serious investigator." He has merely proffered bluster for argument.

The further proposition that "Professor Maurice Goguel of Paris has recently written a book in which he sets forth the reasons why the Protestant Modernist rejects the Christ-myth theory of a few eccentric critics" is of the same vacuous order. The present writer has "set forth the reasons" for describing even the courteous and temperate work of Professor Goguel as a nugatory though a careful performance, based on no adequate study of the myth theory, and amounting in effect only to a re-assertion of the à priori claim. That claim is finally seen to be the whole stock-in-trade of Mr. Wright. "*My* second suggestion," he announces, "is that behind Christianity and behind the Gospels there is a great and overwhelming personality of goodness, truth, and beauty"—the vain asseveration which we have heard a hundred times, and which had been far more impressively put by Dr. Burkitt long before Mr. Wright.

After his confident assurance to the readers of the *Expository Times* in 1926 that the myth theory has been "discredited," Mr. Wright has seen fit to contribute to the *Modern Churchman* in 1927 an

article in which he undertakes, all the same, to confute it. Trading mainly on the arguments of Professor Goguel, he makes no attempt to meet the criticisms which have been passed on them, saying nothing of the fact that the à priori theory finally relied on by Prof. Goguel is repelled by Professor Van den Bergh van Eysinga: even as he cites anew the performance of Dr. Conybeare without one glance at the rebuttals of that. For such combatants as Mr. Wright, it suffices to state that Dr. Conybeare charged myth theorists with perpetrating "howlers," without specifying them; and without mention of the fact that Dr. Conybeare was guilty of blunders on New Testament matters which would have been discreditable to a Sunday schoolboy.

Beyond wordily reiterating the à priori claim, on which he is apparently incapable of reasoning, Mr. Wright contributes to the debate only a reiteration of M. Goguel's argument that the silence of Josephus was perfectly natural, and that it is "*more* embarrassing for the mythologists than for their opponents."[1] If Mr. Wright turns to the work of his ally Dr. Klausner, he will find that scholar explaining[2] that the Jesus tragedy made too small an impression to be remembered; while Professor Burkitt, on the other hand, thinks the testimony of Josephus genuine. The "embarrassment" really does not lie with the mythologists. But when Mr. Wright actually appeals to Anatole France's picture of Pilate as having no recollection of Jesus, he sets us wondering whether he really knows when he is stultifying his own case.

[1] M. Goguel wrote "*perhaps* more embarrassing." Mr. Wright tactfully omits the "perhaps." [2] See below, p. 138.

Even the argument in the *Expository Times* is followed by an admission which unwittingly undermines Mr. Wright's whole case. "I know," he goes on, "that these phrases [as to the necessary Personality] may be used to hide difficulties. But I make this second assertion in order to set forth my own divergence from those who, while accepting the historicity of Jesus, seem to me to make Him a somewhat unimportant figure." That is to say, there are scholars, presumably "competent and serious investigators" (else Mr. Wright would surely dismiss them with one of his facile formulas), who see in the gospels a historical figure which is *not* "a great and overwhelming personality." Then the position that such a personality is required to account for the ecclesiastical evolution is denied not only by the myth-theorists but by some theologians describable as competent and serious investigators. Of what value, then, is the appeal to the consensus of professional theologians?

It is told that Harvey's doctrine of the circulation of the blood was not accepted in his day by any physician over forty. That is, broadly speaking, precisely what was to be expected, especially seeing that Harvey himself took a long time to see the (to us) plain inference from facts which had been established before him. That "Protestant Modernists" should be unable to accept the thesis of the non-historicity of the gospel Jesus is a phenomenon of the same order; and Mr. Wright's inference from it is in the ordinary way of theological paralogism.

The true student will at once recognize, first, that à priori asseveration counts for nothing; and, secondly, that it is idle in such a debate to resort to the counting of heads. Galileo was easily non-suited on that simple plan, as he in turn expected

to be. As a matter of fact, there is scholarly testimony to the wide acceptance of the myth theory. Scores of professional notices have admitted the cogency of much of the reasoning of Professors Drews and W. B. Smith; and Professor Van den Bergh van Eysinga ranges himself on the side of his compatriots Pierson, Loman, and Bolland. Twenty years ago Professor Schmiedel of Zurich wrote, in a lecture on 'Jesus in Modern Criticism,' that "for about six years the view that Jesus never really lived has gained an ever-growing number of supporters. It is no use to ignore it, or to frame resolutions against it in meetings of non-theologians."[1] That the number of supporters has greatly increased in these twenty years will hardly be disputed by any educated non-theologian, or even by well-informed theologians.

Yet this proves nothing. In the same period there has probably been a considerable increase in the (proportional) numbers of Spiritualists and believers in "Christian Science," to say nothing of believers in Communism. The question for the serious student is *not* What are the numbers? but What are the arguments? And for the supporters of the myth theory—who are not at one in all their arguments—it is safe to say that they desire no assents save those of students who have weighed both sides of the debate. Their chief difficulty has been to find new antagonists who advance any arguments at all beyond the rhetorical formulas above noticed.

Latterly, however, despite the suggestive abstinence of Mr. C. J. Wright, some arguments have been forthcoming; and one is disposed to say that

[1] Eng. trans. of lecture cited, 1907, pp. 12-13.

they indicate the beginning of the end of the traditionist defence. One of the latest is that put by Dr. J. Warschauer in his 'Historical Life of Christ,'[1] dedicated to Dr. Albert Schweitzer and introduced, though not sponsored, by Professor F. C. Burkitt. Nothing in the whole debate, perhaps, reveals more disastrously the dialectic bankruptcy of the more confident traditionists, who yet presumbly pass as "serious and competent investigators." In the forefront of his work Dr. Warschauer thus commits himself :—

"We shall deem it unnecessary to deal with those aberrations of criticism which would seek to reduce the Figure of Jesus Christ to myth or fiction; the absurdity of such attempts is too patent to need refutation. We would merely remind the reader that, even had none of the Gospels come down to us, we should have *irrefragable and detailed testimony* to the historical Jesus in the Letters of the Apostle Paul, written in the fifth and sixth decades of the first century by one who was closely acquainted with men who had themselves been on terms of personal intimacy with our Lord. From these Epistles alone we should have learned that a mighty Personage of the name of Jesus, many of whose disciples still survived (I Cor. xv, 6), had recently been exercising a remarkable activity in Palestine; that among his many followers there had been an inner circle of twelve (*ib.* verse 5), some of whom he names (Gal. ii, 8, 9) as personally known to him, as was also one of the Lord's brothers, James, who occupied a leading position in the early church (Gal. i, 19; ii, 9), having *joined the circle of the Apostles;* that this community believed Jesus to be the Messiah or Christ..... that His disciples were *convinced* that he had manifested Himself to them repeatedly after his death (*ib.* xv, 5-8); and that his return was anticipated by them in the near future, on the authority of his own promises (I Thess. iv, 15-17). The Pauline Epistles are sufficient, and more than sufficient, to dispose of the so-called 'Christ-myth.'"

Let it be observed that Paul is here cited as proving the *historicity* of Jesus by a testimony to

[1] Fisher Unwin Ltd. (Ernest Benn Ltd.), 1927.

his *resurrection*, which Dr. Warschauer *does not believe to have taken place*; and that the testimony is avowedly that of a writer who himself had *not* believed in the resurrection when it was proclaimed by the alleged witnesses. Not content with this sleight-of-hand use of "evidence," Dr. Warschauer alleges mention of a "remarkable activity" to which there is *no testimony whatever* in the document cited. Needless to say, not a moment's notice is given to the view, now common among scholars, that the Pauline passage cited is one of two flagrant and cognate interpolations in the epistle. But these are small matters compared with the act of dialectic self-destruction in which the above-cited deliverance is the first step.

Passing from that idle parade of an argument which Dr. Warschauer must know is familiar to every student, and has been repeatedly rebutted, we proceed to page 305 of Dr. Warschauer's book. There he has to deal with the Pauline account of the establishment of the Sacrament, which he does *not* accept as historical; and thus he commits himself:—

> "It is a remarkable circumstance that in introducing the account of what happened in the night in which Jesus was betrayed (I Cor. xi, 23) *Paul does not say that he learnt the facts from the other apostles, but makes use of the very striking formula, 'I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you.'*.....(Cp. Gal. i, 12). That is to say that, so far from invoking, he repudiates human authority, both for his teaching in general and for his account of the institution of the Lord's Supper in particular, but declares that his knowledge has come to him through supernatural channels."

As Dr. Warschauer is good enough to admit by implication, this is valid only for the faithful; and he proceeds to suggest, guardedly of course, that the story is a fiction, and that the Sacrament really

came from the outside. It does not occur to him to suggest an interpolation : he leaves Paul saddled with the invention. Returning now to the exordium before cited, we realize that Dr. Warschauer has there founded himself, for his dismissal of the myth theory, on precisely the kind of evidence which, near his close, he admits to be valueless.

For the passage I Cor. xv, 6, which he puts foremost as "irrefragable.....testimony to the historical Jesus," is introduced by that same formula : "*For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received*," which, as Dr. Warschauer later obliviously avows, "repudiates human authority" and idly claims knowledge through supernatural channels.

Thus the "biographer" has staked his "historical" case on a piece of testimony which he later admits to be, in respect of its avowed supernaturalism, of no validity for historical purposes. The comment on such a performance is not a mere retort of the writer's own blatant charge of "absurdity." Neither is it a suggestion that he is consciously playing fast and loose; for such conscious chicanery would be too dangerous on the part of any publicist open to criticism. The just verdict is that his brain does not properly function. He simply cannot "collect his thoughts." Regarding the Pauline story of the Last Supper as a wilful fabrication, he could not, if his mind worked properly, have cited *any* Pauline passage to prove a historical truth. But his mental processes are so utterly incoherent that he not only thus belies himself, but actually founds on a form of assertion which anon he avows to be, *by* its form, cancelled for all purposes of historical proof.

And such is the critical ignorance and ratioci-

native incompetence of the average pressman and the average cleric that an undertaking which is a mere collapse of dialectic, a stultification of its own thesis, passes with them as a sound contribution to a great debate; and the myth theory, which has but been subjected to a small dust-storm, is declared to have been once more "exploded."

But even Dr. Warschauer has been partially outdone. Lamentable as is his dialectic suicide, he is entitled to credit for his courage. He has at least advanced an argument. Those are hardly the comments suggested by the immediately preceding 'Life' by the Jewish scholar, Dr. Joseph Klausner of Jerusalem, whose 'Jesus of Nazareth'[1] has been acclaimed, with some betrayals of misgiving, by a number of traditionists glad of a Jewish support to the historicity of Jesus, albeit at the price of unpleasant criticism. They get from him this :—

"During the time (fifty years or less) which elapsed *between the death of Jesus* (at the date approximately recorded by the Canonical Gospels) and the age of Josephus and R. Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, or between Paul and Tacitus, it was quite impossible for a purely fabricated presentment of the *figure* of Jesus *so firmly* to have gripped people's imagination that historians *like Josephus* and Tacitus, and men like R. Eliezer ben Hyrcanus (who was so cautious in transmitting what he had heard from his teachers), should believe in his existence and all refer to him as one who had lived and worked quite recently and had made for himself friends and disciples; or that Paul should have had *such a complete belief* in him and *never doubt that James was the brother*,[2] and Peter and his fellows disciples of Jesus.

"That much is clear; and those who would utterly deny not simply the form which Jesus now assumes in the world or that which he assumes according to the Gospels, but even his very existence *and the great positive, or negative, impor-*

[1] Eng. trans., Macmillan Company, New York, 1925.
[2] On this head see the following section.

tance of his personality—such men *simply deny all historic reality*."[1]

The Jewish scholar has evidently learned his business from his Christian corrivals: "it will go hard but he will better the instruction." If they bluster, he will compete. He no doubt supposed he was putting a sequence of argument; unfortunately he shares the normal infirmity of the devotee, to the extent of inability to realize the difference between a *sequitur* and a *non-sequitur*. And he too turns his guns upon himself, to say nothing of his discussing the myth theory without knowing the positions.

1. Vacuously announcing that his opponents "deny all historic reality"—in which case he need hardly have troubled to discuss them—he argues that it was a belief in a *figure* of Jesus that had "gripped people's imagination" by the time of Josephus. As we have seen, the entire epistolary literature of the New Testament shows that no human "figure" of Jesus existed in the imagination of any.

2. Knowing that the "testimony" of Josephus is held by the great majority even of the biographical school to be a complete forgery; himself insisting that it *contains* a gross forgery; claiming only that he "believes, *however*, that there are *not sufficient grounds* for supposing the *whole* to be spurious," he puts Josephus as a *decisive* witness to the historicity of the gospel Jesus. It is difficult here to infer a mere collapse of logical perception; but if we abstain from any further charge, that must be put with particular emphasis.

3. The argument as to the length of time needed

[1] Work cited, p. 70.

to develop a belief in the gospel Jesus is either an avowal of almost entire ignorance of the myth theory, or another prodigy of dialectic miscarriage. The myth theory posits a *prior* (*i.e.*, "pre-Christian") currency of (*a*) a sacrosanct Jesus-name, and (*b*) a cult of a sacramental character. If Dr. Klausner does not know this, his attack on the myth theory is merely ignorant, in that he does not know what he is aspersing. If he does know it, the comment would seem to be, of necessity, that his attack is fraudulent.

4. And our doubts as to his good faith become somewhat acute when we note that, while actually appealing to late Rabbinical testimony (in the case of Eliezer) as proving the historic actuality of the gospel Jesus, he has previously (p. 23) noted that in the time of the said Eliezer the Jews talked of Jesus "Ben Panthera" or "Ben Pandera"; and, before that (p. 19), had thus delivered himself on the whole question :—

> "The appearance of Jesus, during the period of disturbance and confusion which befell Judæa under the Herods and the Roman Procurators, *was so inconspicuous an event* that the contemporaries of Jesus and of his first disciples *hardly noticed it*; and *by the time that Christianity had become a great and powerful sect* the 'Sages of the Talmud' were already far removed from the time of Jesus, and *no longer remembered in their true shape* the historical events which had happened to the Christian Messiah : they *were satisfied with the popular stories* which were current concerning him and his life."

It would be difficult to match, in serious scholarly controversy, this employment of mutually destructive propositions to prove one and the same thesis. Dr. Warschauer is Dr. Klausner's only recent rival of outstanding importance ; and *his* exploit seems so clearly a matter of cerebral hiatus that we dismiss, in his case, the hypothesis of critical jugglery.

If in the case of Dr. Klausner we are strongly tempted to frame it, that writer has at least no ground for complaint. A critic who alleges that his antagonists "deny all historic reality" can scarcely expect lenient judgment when he is caught thus playing fast and loose with historical testimony. And yet it may be that in the case of Dr. Klausner as in that of Dr. Warschauer we are merely witnessing once more the stupefying effects of fervid presupposition on average minds bent on finding semblances of reasons for beliefs unthinkingly adopted.

Long ago Renan remarked on the normal bad faith of theologians; proceeding at times, indeed, to exhibit a certain deficiency of scientific good faith in his own handling of his biographical problem. After his youth, however, Renan was never guilty of aggressive insolence; whereas the common run of our vindicators of the historicity of Jesus seem dependent on the stimulant of insolence in the ratio of their congenital incompetence for argument. It will perhaps, then, be for our own good to turn away for the present from these artists of the market-place to consider the considerate arguments of theological scholars who combine a high scholarly competence with a spirit of courtesy and candour, and who argue, if not convincingly, yet in the spirit of reason, and certainly in good faith.

One thing, indeed, Dr. Klausner has done for the warning of other supporters of the biographical view. It would seem unnecessary, henceforth, to reply to those who have argued, visibly in good faith, that if there were no historic basis for the general narrative as to Jesus in the gospels the Rabbis of the second century would have said so.

Dr. Klausner's avowal may suffice to dispose of that plea. But if haply such a bi-frontal reasoner should be regarded askance as untrustworthy, it is pertinent to note that in the Dialogue of Justin Martyr with Trypho[1] the Father ascribes to his Jewish opponent the very position which, we have been told, the Rabbis did not take up. "Christ," says his Trypho (c. 8), "if he has indeed been born, and exists anywhere, is unknown.....And you, having accepted a groundless report, invent a Christ for yourselves, and for his sake are heedlessly perishing."

The Father's reply is not a citation even of gospel testimony but a voluble resort to Old Testament prophecy, sufficiently indicative of the normal Christian attitude to evidence. And when the disputants proceed to discuss Justin's doctrine that Jesus was a pre-existent God, it becomes clear enough that "historicity" is a concept that had not then dawned on the Christian intelligence.

II.—Current Arguments

§ 1. "*The Brothers of the Lord*"

Less than a century ago theologians in general, but the Catholics in particular, were much concerned to prove that the Jesus of the Gospels had no brothers, and no sisters. The inspiring presupposition was the Perpetual Virginity of the Virgin Mary—a dogma specially dear to Catholics, but important also to Protestants who set store by the notion of the Virgin Birth. To-day practically

[1] A rhetorical composition in dialogue form, but probably motived by actual disputation with Jews.

all "progressive" theologians are concerned to prove that Jesus *had* brothers, that being one way of proving that he really existed. For that matter, the "cousins" of the old exegesis, if verifiable, would have been equally good evidence; but the fact that in antiquity cousins were often described as brothers or sisters is now never mentioned. "Brothers" must be found for Jesus, at any cost. The claim, then, must be investigated.

For every alert student, indeed, the strongest documentary grounds for inferring the existence of a historical Jesus are the text in First Corinthians, ix, 5, referring to "the brothers of the Lord and Cephas," and that in Galatians, i, 19: "I saw none save James, the brother of the Lord." The argument from these texts is little affected, *prima facie*, by the question of authenticity. Supposing them to be either interpolations or parts of a pseudepigraphic letter, they still seem to point to the currency, in the first or second century, of such a descriptive phrase. The gospel mention of "his brethren" has no historic weight: the epistolary allusion is documentarily on another footing.

At the very outset, however, it raises acute difficulties. Never in the gospels is any brother of Jesus alluded to as following him: the indications are all the other way. We have James the son of Alphæus and James the son of Zebedee, and possibly a third James who was either father or brother of Judas, not Iscariot. Nor are any uterine brothers of Jesus mentioned in the Acts. We have there (xii, 2) the mention of the killing by Herod of "James the brother of John," and, in the same chapter, mention of yet another James, without surname, with whom Peter acts; but no mention

of a James the brother of the Lord. The usual inference is that the second "James" is the son of Alphæus. If there was an eminent James, a brother of Jesus, how comes he to be ignored in the Acts?

We are there told, in a visibly interpolated clause (i, 14), that the apostles "continued stedfastly in prayer, *with the* [*or*, certain] *women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.*" That Mary is only here mentioned in the Acts, passing out without a word of notice, is sufficient proof of the heedlessness of *that* insertion; but the brethren are in the same case. Two Jameses and Judas the son of James have just been mentioned; how could the "brethren" have been historically mentioned *without* names? The italicized words are visibly a wanton intercalation.

Professor Orello Cone, handling the problem in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, decides that "James, surnamed the Just, although sharing with the brothers, of whom he was probably the oldest, in their opposition to Jesus during his public ministry, appears to have been converted to his cause *soon after the resurrection*. According to I Cor. xv, 7, he was a witness to one of the manifestations of the risen Christ." But the James of that text is *not* called the brother of Jesus; and so to identify the name is to exclude the two apostles of that name. The wording: "to James; then to all the apostles," does not imply that James was not an apostle; for we have previously: "to Cephas; then to the twelve." Professor Cone is building with straws.

If we hold to the epistolary testimony as genuine, there is only one solution that will meet the case; and that is that "Brothers of the Lord" was a *group title*, analogous to the quasi-sect-titles "of Christ,"

"of Paul," "of Apollos," "of Cephas." The phrase, be it noted, is not "brothers of Jesus," but "brothers of the Lord." That title could conceivably be used by men who made no pretensions to family kinship with the gospel Jesus. To argue, as does Professor Goguel, that the theory is barred because there is no other trace of such a group title is to point to the answer that there is no other mention of "brothers of the Lord" at all.

On the other hand, both epistolary passages are under suspicion, seeing that one uses the plural; and neither in the Acts nor anywhere else in the New Testament are any uterine brothers of Jesus spoken of as members of the Church. The Pauline expression is thus doubly enigmatic; and if we turn either to the hypothesis of interpolation or to that of non-genuineness of both epistles, there may be another solution there. For a late interpolator, or a Pauline pseudepigrapher, confused by gospel passages which could suggest brothers of Jesus—as Mark xv, 40—might jump to the conclusion that James and Joses were brothers of Jesus, and were among the "pillars" of the early cult. Either way, the Pauline texts cannot establish anything; and the more considerate defenders of the historicity of Jesus, in general, appear to recognize this by not pressing the point.

But the prudence of the Christian modernist does not recommend itself to the latest Jewish biographer of Jesus. It is from Dr. Klausner (p. 234) that we get this:—

"As is apparent from one passage in the Gospels [Lk. ii, 7 (and in a variant form Matt. i, 25)] and another in St. Paul [Romans viii, 29], Jesus was 'the firstborn among many brethren.' He had, furthermore, at least two sisters....."

No Christian scholar, probably, has ever carried

evidence-mongering further than this. The passage in Romans runs :—

> For whom he [God, or "the Spirit"] foreknew he also fore-ordained to be conformed to the image of his Son, *that he might be* the firstborn among many brethren ; and whom he fore-ordained, them he also called.

The most orthodox and the most advanced of Christian commentators recognize that here there is no allusion to brothers-german but to the whole family of "the faith." Such a puerile misinterpretation, coming from one who accuses myth-theorists of denying "all historic reality," is a cue to mentality.

Those who claim to prove that "Brothers of the Lord" cannot have been a group-title are oblivious of the vital difficulty set up for themselves by the acceptance of the traditional view. It discredits not only the gospels but the Acts of the Apostles, which professes to relate the establishment and propagation of the cult without a hint that actual brothers of Jesus, as such, played any authoritative part in the process. In the Epistle they outclass the apostles in general. The one critical inference open, if we take the Pauline phrases as primordial, is that Paul faced a cult conducted not by Twelve Apostles but mainly by a group styled Brothers of the Lord, of whose cult history the gospels tell nothing, *their* record being wholly factitious.

§ 2. *Dr. Schmiedel's "Pillar Texts"*

Though Professor Maurice Goguel, as aforesaid, has conducted his criticism of the myth theory with temperance and courtesy, he can hardly be said to have made any special contribution to the defence, explicitly relying as he does on the

à priori plea—the "must." The use of that plea is really an invalidation of all à posteriori argument in such a case, as it was in regard to the Copernican and the Darwinian hypotheses. It is fitting, therefore, to deal with the arguments of scholars who are either recognizant of the futility of the à priori argument or content to work without it.

Of these, the two most notable to a rationalist eye in the past twenty years have been Professor Schmiedel of Zurich and Professor F. C. Burkitt of Cambridge, scholars of the highest eminence, whom it is impossible to read without valuing their insight, liking their amenity, and esteeming their candour. It is only after having weighed the reasons of such disputants that the myth theorist can have the comfort of knowing that he has heard the best of what can so far be urged against his positions, and concluding that he is not dangerously buoyed-up by the spectacle of the incompetence of his other gainsayers.

Professor Schmiedel specially challenges our respectful attention by his well-known and scrupulously framed argument, in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, from what he has termed "pillar texts"—to wit, a selection of nine texts in the gospels which are claimed to be, in their very nature, inconceivable as inventions by Jesus-worshippers, and must therefore be regarded either as real utterances of the Founder, preserved by hearers, or veridical reports of episodes in which he figured. The Swiss Professor of course regards many other texts, reporting utterances or episodes, as quite reasonably credible; but for these nine he claims that they *cannot have been invented*, and therefore decisively prove the historicity of Jesus.

The series has been independently discussed

by Professor W. B. Smith[1] and by the present writer,[2] and what is now presented is a summary of rebuttals.

1. The first step may fitly be the searching denial by Professor Smith of Dr. Schmiedel's à priori claim that certain presentments of the God-Man as merely human would never have been invented by writers who, like "Matthew" and "Mark," regarded him as a supernatural being. As Dr. Smith justly insists, the variety of *possible* conceptions of the God-Man in the early Christian centuries was incalculable. A recent writer, in the most useful chapter of a curiously miscarrying book, has shown how the "five Christologies" of theological history are composed from an absolute medley of concepts in the New Testament.[3]

2. It may be added that Dr. Schmiedel is not on solid ground inasmuch as he here ignores the indisputable multitude of tamperings with the texts during the first three centuries, and the obvious possibility that things which the first evangelists would not have written may have been interpolated by later men leaning to views diverging from theirs. Incidentally, it may be noted that on his principles he is at least bound to admit, with Professor Burkitt, the authenticity of the old reading "Jesus Barabbas" in Matthew (xxvii, 16), seeing that, while there are obvious reasons why the Church should wish to drop the "Jesus," none can be suggested for the invention of such a name by Christians.

3. In particular, Dr. Schmiedel has founded on

[1] *Ecce Deus*, 1912, p. 177 *sq.*
[2] *Christianity and Mythology*, 2nd ed., 1910, p. 441 *sq.*
[3] Dr. Vacher Burch, *Jesus Christ and His Revelation*, 1927, ch. iii.

one text—"Why callest thou me good?" (Mark x, 18; Lk. xviii, 19)—which is not only in itself a very unlikely utterance but is part of a Matthæan passage of which the MSS. give different readings. His argument is that, inasmuch as Jesus here says "None is good, save God only," he is denying his divinity; whereas "Mark" in general treats him as divine. Curiously, the Professor does not ask the question, How came Mark to regard Jesus as divine if he has to record that Jesus expressly denied it? That dilemma is fatal to Dr. Schmiedel's own position. But still more serious is the overlooking of the fact that the early Fathers in general, without misgiving, saw in the passage a claim by Jesus that he was divine. This, unnoticed by Professor Schmiedel, is decisively noted by Professor Smith. And the argument of the Fathers was perfectly natural. When Jesus says in effect: "Why callest thou me good, knowing that only God is good?" he is forensically saying, "By calling me good you admit my divinity." And "Mark" might conceivably take just that view.

The passage, further, has striking marks of invention. As an answer to the courteous—and surely common—accost of "Good Master," the challenge is a perversely disputatious procedure, very much like the forensic passage between Jesus and the Scribes as to the payment of tribute to Cæsar, where he is made to quibble very idly. When we note that in Matthew (xix, 16) the initial "Good" is absent from the best codices (the Sinaitic, the Vaticanus, and the Codex Bezae), and is accordingly dropped by Alford, Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, B. Weiss, Westcott and Hort, and the Revised Version, the matter takes on a new aspect. There the questioner merely

asks what good thing he shall do, and is told either that "the Good is one"—a pagan formula—or that "there is but one that is good."

If now, suspending the common assumption (shared by Professor Smith) that Mark is the earliest of the synoptics, we regard the corrected Matthæan reading as the original, we get a simple solution. Matthew reproduces one of the current "*Logia* of the Lord." Mark, with both Matthew and Luke before him, takes the opportunity, by reading "Good Master," to make out (as the Fathers understood him) that Jesus turned the query into an admission of his divinity. That view becoming ultimately prevalent in the Church, the text of Matthew was at a late date tampered with by the insertion from Mark of a "Good" which in that case was nothing to the purpose. Thus a perfectly straightforward scrutiny cancels once for all this particular "pillar text." If there is any more reasonable solution of the whole matter, let the biographical school produce it.[1]

4. Almost weaker still is Dr. Schmiedel's "pillar" text (Mark iii, 21) stating the opinion of "those with" Jesus that he was distraught. The passage, to begin with, is unintelligible as it stands in our versions; and, as Dr. Smith suggests, the variant in Codex Bezae, making "the scribes and the rest"

[1] The Marcan text raises a highly important question in connection with the recent theory that the Gospel according to Mark is really the partially redacted Gospel according to Markion or Marcion. Concerning Marcion, we are told by Hippolytus that he denied the perfect goodness of Christ, and in this connection quoted "Why call ye me good?"; while Epiphanius tells us that Marcion read "Call me not good." Marcion, we are told, claimed to select from the text of Luke. But if "Mark" then existed, why should he not have cited Mark also, in this as in many other connections? To discuss the problem at this point would confuse the issue. It is dealt with in the Appendix.

try to overpower Jesus, "for they said that he dements them," is much more plausible. But inasmuch as Dr. Schmiedel assumes that the idea of presenting the God as charged with madness could not be invented by believers in him, the whole case is nugatory. The presentment of a demigod as distraught is one of the prominent features of pagan mythology ; and when the charge, as in Mark, is said to be made by the God-Man's associates, and nevertheless to be false, it is visibly a *likely* invention. Among other things, it disparages the Jews and the disciples, but not Jesus.

If this answer be repelled, let the antagonist apply Dr. Schmiedel's argument to the cult of Herakles, as exhibited to us in the *Hercules Œtaeus* of Seneca.[1] There the irresistible demigod, victor over all foes, including "death and hell," is made first to boast of his invincibility, and then, under torture, to shriek and weep. Is it to be argued, then, that those who worshipped him as the mightiest of demigods "could not have invented" a myth which shows him overthrown by the centaur's fraud, and reduced to grovel on the earth in his pain ; and that therefore there *must* have been a Herakles who so suffered? And so with the story of his madness in the *Hercules Furens*? These would seem to be corollaries of Dr. Schmiedel's plea.

5. To found on the passage in Matthew xii, 31 *sq.*, declaring blasphemy against "the Son of Man" to be pardonable, seems an unfortunate step on Dr. Schmiedel's part. The passage is visibly part of the theological procedure to establish the supersanctity of the Holy Ghost, formulated for clerical use in the Acts story of Ananias and Sapphira.

[1] See above, p. 71.

6. Hardly more plausible is the claim that the text (Mk. xiii, 32): "But of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father," would not be invented by believers in the God-Man. That the Son was "a little lower than" the Father was the natural first position of the Christists. Before them, the Jewish Jesuists of the *Didachê*—echoed in Acts iii, 13, 26—made Jesus the "Servant" of the Father. But that he is "fulfilling the will of the Father" is the common gospel position. In not knowing all the counsels of the Father he is simply put on a level with the younger Gods of Olympus.

7. Distinctly stronger is the claim that the cry of despair on the cross (Mk. xv, 24; Mt. xxvii, 48), "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" is unlikely to be a Christian invention. But this "pillar," as it happens, has been destroyed for us by Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter, who in his 'First Three Gospels,' *after* using this very argument, adopts Schleiermacher's view that the phrase, which derives from Psalm xxii, is meant to suggest the whole Psalm, which closes in hope.[1] Those who may be too much scandalized by the tactics of Dr. Carpenter to adopt a view which he endorses, must remember (*a*) that he is not its first framer, and (*b*) that to regard the God-Man as drinking the cup of the bitterness of death is really part of the complete dogma of his saving sacrifice. A God who died tranquilly, knowing his immortality, would not meet that conception. Besides, the Psalm supplied the usual traditionary motive. And, yet further, as the Chorus in the *Suppliants* of Æschylus (213–215), praying to "holy Apollo,

[1] Work cited, 3rd ed., pp. 300, 348.

a God once exiled from heaven," recall to him that experience, and adjure him therefore to be benign to mortals, so would the Christists wish that their God should be able to feel for them.

8. The passage (Mk. viii, 12; Mt. xii, 39; xvi, 4; Lk. xi, 29) concluding: "There shall no sign be given unto this generation," does not at all serve Dr. Schmiedel's purpose; on the contrary, it creates a bad dilemma for himself. On his view, Jesus was a man making no pretensions to supernatural status. Then how should such a man declare that "there shall no sign be given to this generation"? The vaticination implies that he *could* give "signs" but will not: a claim to supernatural power, with the additional claim of a supernatural knowledge that no one else will give them. In all three synoptics it is the Son of God who is speaking. And if we suppose the full Matthew text to be the earlier form, the curtailment by Mark is perfectly intelligible in view of the obscurity of the whole passage.

9. At first sight the Marcan text (vi, 5; cp. Mt. xiii, 53 *sq.*; Lk. iv, 16–30), "And he could there do no mighty works, *save* that he laid hands on *a few* sick folk and healed them," is something of a "pillar" for Dr. Schmiedel, inasmuch as it naïvely declares the healings to depend on the faith of the patients. But it would surely be demanding too much theoretic precision of a believer to call on him to recognize that this was a limitation of the God-Man's power to create faith. The doctrine of the potency of faith is by him expressly inculcated in the gospels. To dwell on the amount of unbelief shown in Galilee was quite in keeping with one side of an evangel which exhorted all to believe in order to be saved.

But, as usual, the chosen pillar turns out to be only a new danger to the main thesis. The scene of failure is Nazareth, the home of the God-Man. The family are not named, or, at this point, even mentioned. Mark, claimed as the first evangelist, has here none of the names given in Matthew (xiii, 55). From him we have only, in the next section, the story of "his mother and his brethren," with a notable difference from Mt. xii, 49. There Jesus "stretched forth his hand *towards his disciples*, and said, Behold, my mother and my brethren": in Mark (iii, 34) he is "glancing round in a circle on those that were seated about him," as T. S. Green renders it. Here we have, as it were, a claim for an institution of "Brothers of the Lord," *not* the Twelve, and *not* uterine brothers, as against an older myth in which the Lord is grouped with mother, brothers, and sisters.

Curiously, we are thus left with only a new and strong doubt concerning the whole "testimony." The proverb has latterly turned up among the *logia* found in Egyptian papyri, in the form: "A prophet is not received in his own city, and a doctor works no cures on those who know him"—a piece of cynicism that suggests a not very dominical origin. Such *logia* circulated as "of Jesus." What are they worth, biographically? To what Jesus were they assigned? Some of them Christians would like to accept; some they will not.

Finally, we are led to surmise that the gospel passages under notice originated under stress of the difficulty that there was no trace left of the influence of Jesus in his own country. As Professor Smith has pointed out, Galilee plays no part in the history of the cult after the death of Jesus. There is no Galilean Church. How could the

evangelists account for the situation save by telling that in Nazareth there was no faith—albeit at the cost of discrediting their own account of the Galilean ministry in general, to say nothing of the Matthæan details about his family? If such an explanation be not accepted, there is one left: that, apart from and before the gospel "movement," there were current *Logia Jesou* such as those latterly dug up in Egypt; that the gospel-makers took such *logia* as they came, giving them to "the Christ." Either way, where is the support for the biographical view as against the myth theory? In the face of Professor Schmiedel's claim, Dr. Rudolf Bultmann decides that the story of the rejection at Nazareth is sheer invention!

10. Of Professor Schmiedel's nine "pillar texts" there remain to be considered two (Mk. viii, 14–21; Mt. xi, 5 = Lk. vii, 22), dealing with the rebuke to the disciples concerning bread and leaven, and the message to the Baptist as to the wonders wrought by Jesus. Here the argument becomes highly embarrassing for the biographical school in general, inasmuch as Professor Schmiedel takes the whole recital by Jesus to allege *spiritual* healings only, and thus to countersay all the stories of miraculous healing; and this view, save for certain phrases, entirely satisfies Professor Smith as expounding the myth theory, and equally Professor Drews, who has latterly developed the symbolistic theory of Mark with great fullness!

Those of us who find a difficulty in conceiving that the gospel according to Mark primarily puts forward an *entirely* symbolical doctrine, in which all stories of healing mean merely conversions of polytheists to monotheism, and that the other synoptics uncomprehendingly literalized the whole,

must for the present leave the biographical school to turn the argument to their account, with Professor Schmiedel granting to two leading myth theorists almost exactly what they want!

Some supporters of the biographical view, approving of Dr. Schmiedel's method, might be expected to add to his pillars.[1] For instance, something might be made of Mark vii, 27, and Matthew xv, 26—the accost to the Syro-Phœnician woman, classifying the heathen as "dogs." On the modern principle that Mark *must* have come first, they might argue that he, the Paulinist, would never have invented so harsh a saying for the Lord. Dr. Vernon Bartlet, indeed, has framed an engaging explanation to the effect that Mark's word *kunarion*, being a diminutive (= "doggie"), suggests a genial twinkle in the Master's eye, and a kindly intonation! But Dr. Bartlet's argumentation seldom carries much weight, and never less than here. There is rather more in the Jewish protest of Dr. Klausner, that "if any other Jewish teacher of the time had said such a thing, Christians would never have forgiven Judaism for it."

This is so far justified that, as we learn from Dr. Montefiore's commentary, "some Christian commentators are much exercised by this story. 'It is sad enough,' says one, 'that a Jewish Christian was still capable of *inventing* it. It is "incredible" that Jesus would have hesitated to help anybody on

[1] Professor W. B. Smith, in the Postscript to his *Ecce Deus* (p. 339), remarks that the Matthæan verse xi, 19 (cp. Lk. vii, 14), citing the reproach of "gluttonous and a wine-bibber," has long seemed to him "by far the most plausible that the historicists can produce." The abstention of Dr. Schmiedel from the employment of that, however, is readily intelligible. It is, in any case, evidence of a conflict of Christian views as to whether the Christ should or should not be an ascetic, a "Nazirite," or a normal man.

the ground that he or she was not a Jew.'" Is not this, then, a "pillar" for those who believe in the priority of Mark? Would *he* have "invented" such a saying for the Lord? Sooth to say, coming in Mark, it is one of the hundred-and-one arguments *against* the priority of Mark. It is a Matthæan story, expressing the older Judaistic attitude, albeit "Matthew" (a late redactor, surely) relates the concession, which duly exalts the principle of "faith." And "Mark" (or a redactor), finding it in Matthew, accepts it as mediating between the Judaists and the Paulinists.

And still the biographical theory is not helped, when some Christian commentators refuse to believe that Jesus can have called Gentiles dogs. Neither Dr. Schmiedel's "pillars," in short, nor any others selected on his principles, will avail to save the historicity of Jesus. The more faithfully we reason on any text, the more surely we seem to be driven—"some Christian commentators" helping—to the solution that it is all myth, be the logion "good" or "bad."

Dr. C. G. Montefiore, that most liberal of Jews, frankly friendly to all that he finds "good" in the gospels, is heartily ready to praise Jesus for the "great" logion of Mark, vii, 15, declaring against all concepts of external religious defilement—albeit he justly defends the Rabbis at other points. Yet his own commentary reveals that such ideas, which he strangely calls "new," were long before current in Greece; so that Christians of the second century were able to improve their gospel ethic at points by pagan leading. Dr. Rudolf Bultmann, whom he quotes, has advanced the sane and sound solution that those stories of debates between Jesus and the Pharisees on religious defilement are simply

expressions of a much later debate between Judaizing and Gentilizing Christians, with the Gentilizing view referred back to the Lord. And Dr. Bultmann in turn, in the teeth of his own just inference, holds that the logion is "most authentic"!

Kept free of many presuppositions by his Jewish descent and training, and laying no violent stress on these, Dr. Montefiore nevertheless yields absolutely to the presupposition of the historicity of Jesus, as do most Jewish scholars of all shades of opinion. But never does he face the myth solution, even in the act of abandoning the entire body of myths of action and great quantities of the Teaching. On one page (xcviii) of his Introduction[1] he quotes from Luke the "Father forgive them!" as one of the noblest sayings in the Gospels, and comments: "But this verse is very possibly not authentic."[2] "Can anything be imagined more superb," he adds, than the passage in Matthew, xxv, 34–40, which is found in Matthew only? "But is it not more than probable," he goes on, "that this passage was not spoken by, and was later than, Jesus?"

He may well ask. The passage embodies a compend of a standard section in the Egyptian 'Book of the Dead';[3] and is quite certainly a late addition to the gospels. Yet, thus confessing the extraneous character of some of the "best" of the

[1] Second edition, 1927.

[2] He might have added that it is pagan. See Montaigne's third essay, recounting a Greek record from Diodorus Siculus, xiii, 21 (102). The text is noted in R.V. as absent from several ancient codices; and its authenticity was expressly denied by Cyril, as against a citation of it by Julian. See T. Whittaker's *Neo-Platonists*, 2nd ed. p. 145.

[3] See *Christianity and Mythology*, 2nd ed. p. 392, and refs. there given.

gospel *logia*, he cites approvingly on the opposite page the claim of Wundt that, while "the outward life of Jesus is a tissue of legends," there is no counterpart in the pagan myths to "the *series* of sayings and speeches of Jesus *as they had been handed down* to us in the Synoptic Gospels." As if that reasoning would not validate the "sayings" in the Fourth Gospel! As if there were not a vast mass of added sayings ascribed to Buddha! As if there had not been ascribed to David and Solomon whole books that they never wrote!

Thus do theologically-trained scholars continue to darken counsel through the survival in them of the faulty modes of ratiocination which all theological training and religious sentiment engender, however humane and truth-loving be their cast of mind. Let the rest of us be the more careful to recognize the measure of their better service, which is large.

§ 3. *Arguments of Dr. Burkitt*

In some respects the Norrisian Professor of Divinity at Cambridge is more circumspect than Dr. Schmiedel in his no less temperate argumentation in favour of the historic character of the gospels. Like him, he only indirectly puts the à priori plea; but neither does he claim to indicate texts which "cannot have been invented." In his little book of three lectures on 'Christian Beginnings' (1924) he even mutes the note to the extent of resignedly confessing that ere long the problem of Christian Beginnings will cease to excite much interest. "We have lost our beliefs in the authority of the Past." Any audacity can find free currency. "But, alas, the old interest is dying." The people who remain religious "tend more and

more to rely on 'Experience.'" In a word, the more intelligent church-people are turning away.

Still, however, he tranquilly propounds reasons for believing that the gospels and the epistles proceed on a real tradition ; and he does not appear to suspect that his arguments, all of them indicating the subjectivity of the documents, can tend to prepare his readers to accept the myth theory. Thus he shows that the title of "Lord" (*Kyrios*) plays a small part in Matthew and Mark, and that the formula "the Lord Jesus Christ" is inferably a product of the Greek-speaking Church at Antioch. The earlier gospels, it follows, are true to the fact that "Lord" was not the usage in Jewry.

For the myth theorist, of course, this creates no obstacle. Matthew is formed in the Jewish environment, and will not trade on a form not in Jewish use, whatsoever redactors may add. Mark, written (as the experts are again inclining to admit) in a Roman environment, for the same reason restricts the use of the term to the Syro-Phœnician woman. Luke simply exhibits the extending Hellenistic influence. But the argument was framed in a reasonable spirit, and it makes an approach to cogency that is never begun in the shouting derision of the brigade who dispose of the myth theory with the "must" formula.

It is in his earlier, but revised, work on 'The Gospel History and its Transmission' (1906-7-11) that Professor Burkitt most fully develops his inductive argument. But it is there that the pseudo-inductive argument most disastrously reveals its infirmity. Even his confident defence of the assumption of the priority of Mark must have revealed to many the factitiousness of that thesis, which has really won its ground because the

absence of the fabulous Birth Story from Mark promises *ad hoc* a sounder historical basis. In every case, the passages reproduced by Dr. Burkitt from Sir John Hawkins fit perfectly well with the view that Mark is a selection from Matthew and Luke. It is significant that the Marcan school never *try* that hypothesis on their passages.

We have already seen that the Marcan version of the "Why callest thou me good?" episode is critically intelligible only as a manipulation by redactors to the purpose of making Jesus press the querist to an admission that Jesus is divine. That interpretation, which concurs with the exegesis of the early Fathers, is mentioned neither by Dr. Chase, whom Dr. Burkitt quotes, nor by himself. They are blissfully confident that Mark was allowing Jesus to deny his divinity; though the exegete frankly confesses that "our Evangelists altered freely the earlier sources which they used," and "does not assert that they were trustworthy, or even truthful."

But it is in his general or ultimate defence that Dr. Burkitt most completely wrecks his venture. For he stakes his case on the thesis that alike the most obvious importations or disarrangements of doctrine and the most incredible fictions of event prove the historicity of Jesus by showing "that the total impression of the life and words of Jesus of Nazareth *made the Evangelist write in this manner*, and *made the Society* for which he wrote *accept the portrait* he has drawn."

That is to say, the more reckless the narrator, the more blindly credulous the audience, the more certain is the abnormal greatness of the Personality which is the subject of the fictions. There can be no mistake about Dr. Burkitt's meaning:

he reiterates it through four pages (ed. 1925, pp. 24–27).

"We shall be told," he writes, "that the Sermon on the Mount itself is not a true discourse at all: it is a cento of more or less detached sayings, grouped under heads, and many of these sayings, *even if they be genuine*, belong to the later stages of the Ministry.....All this is more or less justifiable historical criticism.....

"But this is not all. The course of events is important, *but the effect produced upon us by the course of events* is still more important. What was the effect which *the course of events*, the Life of Jesus Christ on earth, produced on our First Evangelist? *Was it not this*, that it *made him arrange His Gospel as it stands for us to read?*"

In other words, the more false witness the better! The more unhistorical the testimony, the greater must have been the inspiring Personality!

"The more a rigorously objective criticism impels us to regard this and that traditional saying of Christ as a later accretion into the Gospel legend, how much more wonderful, how much more forceful, must He have been round whose Personality *grew up not only the stories of the Nativity and the Temptation* but *also the parables* of the Prodigal Son and of the Pharisee and the Publican?"

The stories are admittedly fables; the best parables are admittedly post-Jesuine; but how much the more remarkable must Jesus have been, of whom such stories could be framed, and *for* whom such parables could be invented! As who should say, What a poet David *must* have been, to have the Psalms ascribed to him!

After such a desperate paralogism, one pauses to draw breath. Avoiding the ordinary "must have been" futility, Dr. Burkitt eclipses it by a theorem from which, one would suppose, the ordinary apriorist must recoil. Yet there it is, a staggering illustration of the power of a presupposition to lead a liberal, enlightened, and candid scholar to logical

vertigo. It is therefore necessary to indicate to possibly bewildered readers a few of the logical implications.

1. Krishna, concerning whom far more wonders are recorded than were invented for Jesus, must have been a much more wonderful personality still. And the (late) Bhagavat Gîta, which endows Krishna with a mystical philosophy, must be taken as proving the "impression" made by his personality on his followers.

2. Only a marvellous personality could have inspired the inventions concerning a Herakles, a Dionysos, an Orpheus, an Osiris, or a Mithra; and only a supremely sagacious actual woman can have inspired the myth of Athênê. (In point of fact, in the eighteenth century Mosheim, the soundest ecclesiastical historian of his time, was convinced that only remarkable Personalities, achieving great exploits, could have given rise to the cults of Mithra and Hermes.)

3. The same line of argument might be made to "prove" the historicity of Hamlet, conceived as Shakespeare conceived him.

4. By the consent of the leading Hebrew scholars, the Book of Joshua is entirely unhistorical. By the test of Dr. Burkitt, however, its narratives, including the staying of the sun, decisively prove the immense impression made by the personality of an otherwise untraced Joshua. Who was he? The present writer's answer is that he was a God; but that would probably not be conceded by Dr. Burkitt.

5. The logical application of Dr. Burkitt's principles to hierology in general would yield the theorem that the cults of Yahweh, Zeus, Bel, Brahma, all the cults of all the "High" Gods of

ancient religions, must proceed on the impression made by them as great human Personalities on the poets and prophets who acclaimed them as Gods ; and the fact that Zeus and Hêrê are about the most realistically depicted personages in the *Iliad* would go to prove that Zeus, at least, must once have been a very remarkable man indeed. That kind of reasoning is as old as Evêmeros : the astonishing thing is to find it freshly adopted by an accomplished modern theologian and scholar.

Dr. Burkitt might perhaps obtain a glimpse of the enormity of his logic if he would in this connection cast a dispassionate eye over the dedication of the Authorized English Version to the Most High and Mighty Prince James. Doubtless James's predecessor had made an impression that validated the figure of that "bright *Occidental Star*," but it has not been commonly held, even in the Church of England, that seven years of James had created a real working conception of him as comparatively "the Sun in his strength," otherwise "that sanctified Person who, under God, is the immediate author of their true happiness." It is now common, among laymen, to decide that the dedication proves, not the supernal attributes of James, but the capacity of theologians to suppress truth and suggest falsehood.

If then a company of sober and serious and pious English scholars, in the year 1611, could thus solemnly present to his contemporaries the figure of the actual James I, what specifiable reason is there for denying that in the first and second centuries of the Christian era devout and ignorant believers in a God-Man could possibly invent astonishing attributes for a Founder whom they had never seen at all ; or for concluding that

the more startling the story, the more marvellous must he have been?

It is irksome to have to frame and press such considerations as against such a publicist. His earnest argument, seriously considered, is in effect a negation of every real critical canon acknowledged in modern historiography. It belongs to the psychology of the medieval believers in the Lives of the Saints—with the difference that it posits as a process of reasoning what they accepted without any pretence of reasoning at all. It seriously calls upon us to recognize that Samson *must* have been a very remarkable man *because* it is told that he slew a thousand men with the jawbone of an ass, and accordingly *cannot* be a sun-myth. "Not for nothing," as Dr. Burkitt predicates, can the stories of the labours of Samson and Herakles have been glyphed and penned.

It must at least be conceded that, after all, the non-reasoners who dispose of the myth theory by the alternate formulas of Pooh and Bah are wise in their generation. They may claim, as against the debaters, to illustrate the force of the counsel: "Give your judgment; but do not give your reasons."

§ 4. *The Argument from Josephus*

We have seen that, under the pressure of the myth theory, there is a growing anxiety on the side of the defence to found on the long discredited "testimony" of Josephus to the historicity of Jesus. The great majority of New Testament scholars appear still to hold, with Dr. Klausner, that a Jew and a Pharisee, as was Josephus, could not conceivably have written that Jesus "was the Christ," since that would have amounted, on his

part, to a declaration that he was a Christian. But even that position is disputed by Dr. Burkitt, doubtless because he sees that the "silence of Josephus" is one of the strongest documentary grounds for rejecting the historicity of Jesus. His argument is that we misconceive the significance of such a phrase as "he was the Messiah" in the mouth of a Jew; and that Josephus might quite well have used it. The theory appears to have satisfied neither Jewish nor Christian scholars, and certainly cannot appeal to the impartial rationalist. It is, in fact, a case of the wish being father to the thought.

Let us, however, faithfully scrutinize anew the disputed passage[1] as a whole, transcribing it from Shilletto's revision of Whiston's translation for the reader's convenience, and noting (1) that the preceding paragraph deals solely with the indignation of the Jews at Pilate's use of "the sacred money" to pay for a supply of water to Jerusalem, and the consequent slaying of a great number of them, rioters and non-rioters indiscriminately, by Pilate's soldiers, outgoing Pilate's commands. The paragraph ends with "Thus an end was put to the insurrection"; and it is to be noted (2) that section 4 of the chapter begins: "*About the same time, also, another sad calamity* troubled the Jews." Between these passages comes § 3:—

"*Now about this time lived Jesus*, a wise man, if indeed it be lawful to call him a man. For he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of men who receive the truth with pleasure; and drew over to him many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was the Christ. And when Pilate, at the information of the leading men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those who had loved him at first did not cease to do so. For he appeared to them alive again the

[1] *Antiquities*, B. xviii, ch. iii, § 3.

third day, as the divine prophets had foretold this and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day."

The attentive reader will at once observe that the suspected passage is introduced exactly in the manner of the introduction of the story of the Lord's impeachment of Judas in Matthew and Mark, and of other gospel interpolations before noted, by the use of *the opening phrase of the passage next following*. One might almost infer that the same interpolator had been at work. But if the reader is not alive to the significance of that phenomenon, let him look to the sequence of the paragraphs. That preceding our § 3 relates a real calamity befalling the Jews. That following professes to relate another. Whether that section in turn (given up as it is to a story of priestly frauds at Rome, and ending: "I now return to the relation of what happened about this time to the Jews at Rome, as I said before I should") is not also open to suspicion is a question for the textual editors of Josephus.[1] But that § 3 is a Christian forgery is a matter to be realized by every student of Christian origins. By its elimination the text proceeds at least intelligibly. By its protrusion as an account of a "calamity that troubled the Jews" we are forced to recognize a gross incongruity.

[1] It is to be noted that a distingished scholar, Dr. Rudolf Steck (see Dr, Smith's *Ecce Deus*, p. 340), has advanced the interesting hypothesis that Josephus may have inserted, in the place of the forged § 3, a section describing Jesus in terms of the Jewish "Ben Panthera" story, making him illegitimate and an impostor; and that this would connect naturally with § 4. Similar suggestions of a "something else excised" have been current since Renan. But a "Ben Panthera" story, on the lines of the *Toledoth Jeschu*, would be a deadly "pillar" for the historicity of the gospel Jesus.

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Dr. Klausner, confident that Josephus could not have called Jesus the Messiah or have admitted that he rose from the dead as the divine prophets had foretold, with "ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him," is yet satisfied to accept the rest, having no eye for the phenomena of total interpolation. Albert Reville, he pronounces, "rightly argues that no Christian interpolator would speak of Jesus as 'a wise man' and so necessitate the further interpolation 'if it be lawful to call him a man.' Nor would a Christian interpolator be satisfied to apply to Jesus the general term 'wonderful works,' or call his disciples simply 'lovers'; nor would he have given the Christians such a name as 'race' or 'tribe' (φῦλον) with its nuance of contempt."

The value of a critic's judgment is to be measured by, among other things, the propositions he puts as self-evident; and the value of Dr. Klausner's confidence in this case may be left to the estimate of the reader. He is in effect arguing that no Christian interpolator of a Jewish document would stop short of the strongest expressions of Christian belief, though the stronger the expressions the surer would be his detection.

It would really be more plausible to suggest that a Christian clever enough to forge anything would have hesitated to insert "He was the Christ"; and that that may well be a super-interpolation. But on the other hand we have to remember that the forgery had to be a laudatory testimony if, from the Christian standpoint of the second or third century, it was to be worth having at all. It could not then be foreseen that the day would come when Christian scholars could be in a mood to be profoundly thankful for a genuine paragraph in Josephus

aspersing Jesus as a false prophet crucified either for making Messianic claims or for profaning the temple!

Thus the argument from the Josephan paragraph stands in no way salved, and in no way vindicated against the mass of criticism that has been passed upon it by scholars of all critical schools. No apologist has ever overcome the solid negative inference from the fact that Origen in his reply to Celsus never once quotes from the Josephan passage, which would have been of so much value to him as a Jewish testimony. No inference is critically possible save that Origen had never seen or heard of the passage, which must have been inserted after his time.

The fact that Origen does repeatedly quote from the reference in Josephus to James the Just is the crowning proof that he knew nothing of the other passage. And the reasons for regarding that passage also as interpolated *before the time of Origen* are irresistible for those who recognize the spurious character of the paragraph on Jesus. Josephus is made to say (*Ant.* xx, ix, § 1) that the high priest Ananus (the second) "assembled the sanhedrim of judges and brought before them *the brother of Jesus who was called Christ, whose name was James*,[1] and some others, and having accused them as breakers of the law, he delivered them over to be stoned." Here the very phrasing tells of manipulation. The naming of James would be the *first* thing after "brought before them," in a natural narrative.

It is easy to understand that those who, like

[1] Literally "the brother of Jesus, him called Christ (James was his name"). See above, section i, as to the whole problem.

Dr. Burkitt, believe this passage to be genuine, should be encouraged to stand by the other; but the improbability of its genuineness is so great that it has been urged by many scholars who had no doubts of the historicity of Jesus. And the answers made to the charge of spuriousness by orthodox scholars are not only bad in themselves but, as has been shown by Professor W. B. Smith, are really pointers to their own refutation. As Professor Smith writes, in the collection of studies which he has entitled 'Ecce Deus':—

"The words in italics have been regarded as spurious—we think correctly. Neander and others defend them, and McGiffert says ('The Church History of Eusebius,' p. 127, *n.* 39): 'It is very difficult to suppose that a Christian, in interpolating the passage, would have referred to James as the brother of the "*so-called* Christ."' Indeed! On the contrary, it is just because this phrase is the most approved Christian, evangelic, and canonic that we suspect it in Josephus. It meets us in Matthew i, 16; xxvii, 17, 22; John iv, 25. *The depreciatory 'so' is not in the Greek.* Thus we read of 'Simon the so-called Peter' (Mt. iv, 18; x, 2), 'the high-priest the so-called Caiaphas' (Mt. xxvi, 3), 'the feast the so-called Passover' (Lk. xxii, 1), 'the man the so-called Jesus' (John ix, 11), 'Thomas the so-called Didymus' (Jn. xi, 16; xx, 24; xxi, 2), 'gate the so-called Beautiful' (Acts iii, 2), 'tent the so-called Holy of Holies' (Heb. ix, 3), where depreciation is out of the question. The indication is merely that of a surname or nickname, or name in some way peculiar or extraordinary."

And the presumption of Christian tampering with the copy of Josephus used by Origen (though it ante-dated the forgery in xviii, iii, § 3) is highly strengthened by the fact that he cites in his reply to Celsus (i, 47; ii, 13) other passages from the 'Antiquities' ascribing the calamities of the Jews to the crime of slaying James the Just. As these passages are found only in a few MSS. of Josephus, and are absent from others, they must be regarded

as spurious ; and if this be so, the spuriousness of the first reference to James as the brother of Christ becomes still more probable.

Even if it were not, the phrase "brother of Jesus," as we have already noted, would be no proof of physical consanguinity. On such points, it need hardly be said, the ordinary defenders of the historicity say nothing. The whole question as to the Josephus passages was fully debated by Professor W. B. Smith, and by Professor Drews in his volume on 'The Witnesses to the Historicity of Jesus.'[1] Yet further, Professor Smith in his 'Ecce Deus' advances (as does Professor Drews) a crushing array of arguments against the authenticity of the passage in Tacitus concerning the burning of Christians by Nero—arguments which no scrupulous historical critic would ignore. But from the latest "biographers" of Jesus there comes no mention of, no attempt at an answer to, the arguments against them. "Theirs not to reason." Their simple task is to asseverate.

If Dr. Klausner had been concerned to handle in scholarly fashion the problem of the Josephus section concerning Jesus, he would have taken account of Professor Smith's exposition of its New Testament phraseology. The phrase "that receive the truth with pleasure" points directly to these : "receive the word with joy" (Luke viii, 13) ; "received the word with all zeal" (Acts xvii, 11) ; "receive with meekness the engrafted word" (James i, 21). The very phrase "until now" points to the "unto this day" of Matthew xxviii, 15. To his own argument that a Christian would not use such a general term as "wonderful works" for

[1] Eng. trans. R. P. A., 1912.

the miracles, it is a sufficient reply, further, that "wonderful works" is no more a belittling expression than "wonderful things" in Matthew xxi, 15.[1] Had he been a disinterested truth-seeker he would have noted for himself what had been pointed out by Professor Smith, that the § 3 section is written in clear short sentences, like so much of the gospels, and quite unlike the involved sentences of the Josephan style. In fine, the latter-day vindication of the Josephan forgery, zealously begun twenty years ago by way of repelling the myth theory, does but proceed from bad to worse, as is the way of all factious defences of false causes.

We have to take account, however, of the already mentioned attempt of Dr. Vacher Burch to establish the theory that in his Aramaic original Josephus penned things which have disappeared from the Greek 'Wars of the Jews.' A study of that attempt will be found to convey the strongest impression of the hopelessness of the whole Josephan argument. During the past twenty years students have from time to time heard of that remarkable discovery of a North Russian translation of the 'Wars of the Jews,' in a manuscript "to be dated somewhere in the late Middle Ages." The "Christian" passages began being discussed by continental scholars in 1906; and in 1924 Mr. G. R. S. Mead translated them into English. The complete text has not yet been published; but that, probably, is of little importance.

The burning question is as to the claim that there were certain passages in Josephus' 'Wars,' in

[1] The Greek terms are different, but the values are the same, as our version testifies.

its original Aramaic or Hebrew form, which were dropped from his Greek translation ; and that those are preserved in the Slavonic translation, which, we are told, can be seen to have been made from the original. When we come to the main passage the claim simply collapses. It is visibly a development of the familiar forged passage in the 'Antiquities,' with the interesting difference that here the Scribes are declared to have offered *Pilate* "thirty talents" to kill Jesus, who has been described mainly in the manner of the pseudo-Josephan passage, with additions, some of which are plainly suggested by the gospels. We get, for instance, the item that it was the habit of Jesus to stay on the Mount of Olives ; and there is an allusion to Pilate's wife's dream.

As for the reasons for believing that Josephus wrote this passage in his original and dropped it in the Greek version, we get from Dr. Burch two propositions, of which it is hard to say which is the feebler. The first is that "No early Christian could have written this," and that "it would be a *greater* impossibility for this to have been written by a Christian hand after the first two centuries." There could be no idler assertion. Thus to pretend to limit the possibility of fraud in either early or medieval Christian literature is a proceeding unworthy of a scholar who knows that the literary frauds of those ages are past counting.

But we need only carry the argument of Dr. Burch to its consequences to realize that it is for him a fatal device. If the passage cannot have been written by a Christian, but could have been written by a Jew, it could obviously have been written by a Jewish forger. And Dr. Burch, as it happens, supplies us with a ground for con-

fessing that a Jewish forger might conceivably find his way into even a Christian document.

He has proclaimed (p. 32) the little-known fact, unmentioned in our Variorum Bibles, that Acts xviii, 4, in the version of Codex Bezae, runs: "On entering into the synagogue every Sabbath-day he [Paul] conversed, *inserting the name of the Lord Jesus*, and persuaded not only the Jews, but Greeks." Could a Christian hand have invented that? If not, must the passage be a true record? And if it be not a true record, who more likely to have invented it, *prima facie*, than a Jew?

Truly, the path of the defender of the faith is strewed with pitfalls. The thesis which appears to be central to Dr. Burch's book is that Jesus must always be thought of as a "Revealer"; that to everything he takes from previous Jewish literature, canonical or uncanonical, he gives a "revealing" quality; and that any given moral maxim, put in the customary words, becomes in his hands a new thing. And even this thesis is of old standing, having been put by Paul Janet, among others, seventy years ago. It is for the critical reader perhaps the most empty of the variants of the à priori argument. But it is perhaps, nevertheless, a safer gambit than the attempt to extract from Christian or Jewish forgeries in Josephus fresh evidence for the historicity of Jesus.

III.—The À Priori Argument

§ 1. *Its Vogue and its Nullity*

We are thus left with the familiar à priori argument, all forms of à posteriori reasoning for

the defence having been found invalid. And the à priori argument, *prima facie*, is actually more plausible than the ostensibly à posteriori argument of Dr. Burkitt: "The greater the fiction, the more certain is the greatness of the Personality so embellished." The ordinary apriorist does not frame such an explicit paralogism. He argues simply that *so* remarkable a movement, *so* remarkable a teaching, must start from a uniquely powerful Personality; and that the accretion of fables and fictions is in the ordinary way of early hierography.

Further, the assumption is not confined to Christians or theists. It was vehemently propounded by Sir J. G. Frazer, twenty years ago, with general reference to discussion then on foot. As he has not replied to the critical rebuttal then made, and has more recently supplied a not antipathetic preface to the English translation of Dr. Couchoud's *Le Mystère de Jésus*, which upholds the myth theory, the illustrious anthropologist may be supposed to have recognized that his scorn and his reasoning had been alike hasty, and that his own mythological canons were against him. Still, other agnostics may and do stand to the general position that "there must have been" a historical Jesus, largely answering to the gospel figure. But how can they make the thesis stand?

It is fairly obvious that the position is dictated by a spontaneous revolt against the notion that such a great "historic fact" as the Christian Church and its creed, with the chronology of the "Christian era," can have arisen out of sheer fiction and delusion. That inference seems too humiliating to the human spirit, too wounding to the instinctive sense of "reality," to permit of its acceptance. But what of historic novelty is involved

in such a theorem? The dating of the Birth of Christ is on a par with the dating of the beginning of the world, and the equally speculative dating of the foundation of Rome. And that is not all. Till the other day, it was the standing ground of all Christians that their faith was founded on "the fact of the Resurrection." It certainly did so stand, for nigh eighteen hundred years. And how many educated men now believe in the Resurrection?

In abandoning that, the "historicists" confess that a vast delusion *can* yield a great historic processus, a colossal series of institutions. For the rest, it is only the heredity of Christian arrogance that keeps men insisting that delusion cannot have been the mainspring of the religion of *their* civilization when they take for granted, without even staying to argue the question, that delusion was the mainspring of the age-long religions of the East, of Egypt, of pagan Greece and Rome, and of the vast welter of the animisms of the savage.

In the eighteenth century the argument which is now relied on to establish the historicity of Jesus was as confidently put to establish the supernatural truth of the entire scheme of Christian theology which the historicists themselves have abandoned. It was thus put by the aged Young, with the pious assent of Cowper:—

> "The fall of man, the redemption of man, and the resurrection of man, the three cardinal articles of our religion, are such as *human ingenuity could never have invented*, therefore they must be divine."[1]

An age which has accumulated a lore of anthropology unknown to Young and Cowper can realize

[1] Cowper's letter to Lady Hesketh, July 12, 1765.

that such an argument amounts to exactly nothing. Is the later use, then, any sounder?

The general answer to Sir J. G. Frazer was that the alleged necessity of a "powerful Personality" does not in the least validate the particular assumption made, seeing that a number of powerful personalities may have been engaged in the making of the gospels, even as powerful prophets proclaimed the actuality of Yahweh and delivered his messages. On this head, indeed, we have from a hot opponent of the myth theory a pronouncement which makes a sad breach in the Personality thesis, as commonly put. It is the late Dr. Estlin Carpenter who writes[1]: "Those who plead that the Church should go 'back to Jesus' must never forget that but for Paul there would (humanly speaking) have been no Church at all."

That is to say, the Great Personality (acclaimed as such by Dr. Carpenter) *could not*, without the work of Paul, have achieved the historical influence which is actually the main ground on which the average apriorist takes for certain the existence of the said Personality. The collision of pleas is surely fatal to one. Which?

A perhaps greater theologian than Dr. Carpenter, the renowned F. C. Baur, put in another form a proposition equipollent with his: "How soon would everything true and important taught by Christianity have been relegated to the order of the long-faded sayings of the noble humanitarians and thinking sages of antiquity, had not its teachings become words of eternal life in the mouth of its Founder!" In other words, the dogmas of Divine

[1] Pref. to English trans. of *Paul*, by the late Professor W. Wrede, 1907.

Sonship, Divine Sacrifice, Eternal Salvation by Faith, are the real foundations and effective factors in the maintenance of the Church : not the inferred human Personality. A Personality, however great, would not have sufficed without the machinery of dogma. If this is true, the "must" argument is already eviscerated, if not exanimated.

Reverse the order of reasoning, and we come again to the positions already indicated in regard to the unquestioned vitality of cults in the historicity of whose "founders" nobody now believes. If millions of men could worship during thousands of years an Osiris, a Krishna, an Adonis, by virtue of habit and efficient priestly organizations, what more reason is there for inferring great primary personalities behind those names than in the cases of Bel and Brahma, Yahweh and Zeus?

It needs no Founder to establish an intense conviction of Godhood. In the day of Plato, if we may rely on the dialogue in the 'Laws,' some men were capable of a fierce resentment of the denial of the divinity of the Sun. The account of it by Anaxagoras as a large white-hot mass bigger than the Peloponnesus roused them to a spirit of murderous retaliation.[1] To suppose that only a real personality can evoke the devotion of uncounted myriads through whole ages is to announce substantial ignorance of the mass of hierology.

§ 2. *Its Analysis*

The apriorist argument, as we have seen, is already stultified for most of those who use it by the avowals made by their allies. Everybody, out-

[1] *Laws*, x.

side the pale of blind faith within which men believe in the Ascension, recognizes myth somewhere in the records. The scholars who alone are debated with in these pages have given up the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection, the miracles, the mission of the Seventy, the trial before Herod, many of the *logia*, and the historicity of the Fourth Gospel in general. Cheyne gave up the Betrayal by Judas; and he privately avowed that he "feared that the Crucifixion would have to be abandoned."[1] Loisy gives up the Night Trial, and avows that if the trial before Pilate can be effectively put in question there is no basis left for a historical Jesus. And how many serious students can convince themselves that the Pilate trial, as described, could really have taken place? And if all or most of these things be myth, what is left?

Loisy, irritated by the pressures of the myth theory, protests that we cannot account for the "conflagration," so to speak, of the Christist movement, without a "match"; and where, he asks, is the match, save in the Personality? Where then was the "match" for Mithraism? Or Yahwism? Or Osirianism? Or the cult of Dionysos? The accomplished scholar seems to have thought little on hierology in general—a fact in keeping with the intuitionist quality of his ethics. The true proximate root of the Jesus-cult, the secret sacrament which develops into the mystery drama, is the "ever-burning lamp" in the case of the Christian movement, even as rites were the vital factors in the other cases. Call the lamp a "match," and the challenge is met. Note that a number of other

[1] See Dr. Edward Greenly's pamphlet, *The Historical Reality of Jesus*, R.P.A., 1927, p. 10.

movements can be seen to coalesce with the Christist,[1] and the "matches" are multiplied.

But Loisy is not alone, he is with the main army of theologians, in his failure to see rightly the economic and socio-political sides of religions in general. Not to speak it profanely, they have no sociology, though they sometimes sociologize over a detail. It would be hard to name one who has noted these three salient facts :—

1. Judaism was preserved after the political fall of Jewry by international popular organization, by the co-operant factors of the temple priesthood, the organized ritual-using synagogue, and the Sacred Books.

2. Christism originally modelled itself, as to organization, on the synagogue, adding also the factor of Sacred Books, and developing organization on the lines of the Imperial structure, finally employing conquest in the manner of Islam when it had become identified with the State.

3. Mithraism, which, as the adopted cult of the Roman army from the time of Pompey onwards, was a far-faring rival of Christianity for four centuries, even without Sacred Books, disappeared not because of lack of a Personality but because of lack of organized adaptation to the general life when the life of the Roman army drew to an end. It was a freemasonry, faced by a quasi-democratic ecclesia which was organized for permeation everywhere, and everywhere drew revenues.

Cults survive inasmuch as they are schemed to survive. Mithraism was never sought to be popularized by its adherents ; rather they cherished a secret and mysterious ritual, expressly adjusted

[1] See *The Jesus Problem*, pp. 107–12.

to the life of the army; and in the Roman Empire Mithraism was never anything else.[1] Christism from the first meant a livelihood for its "prophets," with the further attraction of sectarian influence. Other Saviour cults there were which never aimed at propaganda or diffusion, subsisting rather in their limited way by their very exclusiveness.[2] Judaism and Christism alone, in that age and world, were systematic in international proselytism, organization, officialization, and the regular extraction of revenue, contriving to be at once demotic and hierarchic; and the Christian Church clearly derived its working ideal and practice from the Jewish model. The age-long cults of Egypt, subsisting on their vast endowments of land as well as by the economic machinery of provision for the souls of the dead, would have lasted forever but for sheer military overthrow; and it was finally by sheer violence that Christian ecclesiasticism destroyed or captured the shrines of paganism. It was a "survival of the fittest to employ force." To generalize the whole socio-political and economic processes as an operation of a Personality on spontaneously recipient souls is to frame a verbal hallucination.

When we speak of the vital importance of the economic factor in all religious history, wiseacres loudly inform us that the economic factor cannot "account for" the beliefs which are financed. Of course it cannot. The causation and persistence of religious belief is the subject of a large literature which the wiseacre might profitably study, but

[1] See the section on Mithraism in *Pagan Christs*.

[2] See *The Evolution of States*, pp. 114–15; and compare *Pagan Christs*, Part I, ch. ii; *Short History of Christianity*, Part I, ch. ii, § 4.

does not. He might thus learn that no belief *subsists as a popular system* without an organized economic basis; and that the religions of Babylonia and Egypt, having such bases, subsisted for more thousands of years than the Christian religion is likely to.

One might read a hundred treatises on Christian origins without finding attention called to facts which leap to the eyes in the Acts and in the Epistles. In the former, the Sin against the Holy Ghost is declared to be defalcation in money payment to the Church, compared with which the Denial by Peter is seen to be a peccadillo. In the Epistles we find Paul battling—or, as some of us think, dramatized by a pseudepigrapher of a later generation as battling—for salaries for the labourers in the vineyard. The text (I Cor. ix, 14) which declares: "Even so did the Lord ordain that they which proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel," tells plainly of a later hand, using a text which had been added to the gospel to the same end.

These were the kind of provisions requisite for the permanent establishment of an organized cosmopolitical Christian Church—these and the further developments of episcopacy, Councils, primacies, papacies, which made the Church a valid instrument of organization for emperors and for kings, and so secured the persistence of the system across the gulf of the decadence. To say that the Personality inspired the economic organization is to come within sight of bathos.

§ 3. *The Thesis of "Sinlessness"*

When such considerations of comparative hierology are (with difficulty) forced on the unwilling

attention of the apriorist, his usual course is to protest that the gospel Jesus is *sui generis*, incomparable, unapproachable, the exponent of a new ethic, the transformer of a dying world into a regenerate one. The essential falsity of the statement need not here detain us: we are concerned with the reasoning. The apriorist expresses himself, in short, exactly as does an earnest Buddhist concerning "the Buddha," the faith in whom, as a real Personality, has swayed the lives of many more millions than have been seriously affected by love of Christ.[1] For the scientific hierologist the Buddha is no more a historic figure than Zoroaster, or Moses, or Jesus; though in that case also some rational scholars affirm the "historicity."

But the outstanding fact is that in all these cases alike the *presented* "Personality" is something non-human, something conceived as supernormal, overwhelmingly great, inexpressibly good, originating all manner of truths and precepts which, nevertheless, we know to be of no one man's origination; as Yahweh and "Moses" are credited with a decalogue growing out of prehistoric law and embodying an actual code.

To attain the purpose of magnification, that is to say, humanity is as systematically undervalued as the Figure is extolled. Credit is withheld from nameless moralists, to be heaped upon that. Many an "educated" Christian feels quite certain that Jesus must have been a supremely "saintly" figure

[1] How the partisan Christian mind reacts against that large historic fact is seen in the pitiful pronouncement of Tulloch: "The character of Çakya-Mouni, pure and noble and self-denying as it *may* have been, was never a *living*, *consistent*, and *intelligible* reality to the millions who submitted themselves to his doctrines or institutions" (*Lectures on Renan's "Vie de Jésus,"* 1864, p. 162).

because he is alleged to have prescribed, in the Sermon on the Mount, love to enemies—a thing that to the natural man seems "angelic." Christian scholars can tell him that there is not an item in that set of precepts which was not in previous circulation, in Jewish forms, long before "Jesus"; but he does not read his scholars, though he counts his general education a sufficient warrant for contemptuous dismissal of the myth theory and for insolence to its propounders.

The fact that such disputants, themselves sinning against the canons of rectitude no less than against the canons of courtesy, are often found convulsively convinced of the "sinlessness" of Jesus, is particularly significant. That doctrine, long ago popularized by Ullmann, is one of the pseudo-arguments most frequently advanced in support of the à priori case. Dean Inge is understood [1] to hold that it is the last conception of which the Church can afford to leave hold; and Professor Foakes-Jackson employs it with the usual professional disregard alike of the difficulties and the answers. He never seems to be aware that there are any. "Jesus as a sinless man," he writes, with sketchy syntax, "is a phenomenon not less strange than one over whom death can have no dominion..... The sinlessness of our Saviour is, after all, perhaps a more complete *proof* of His Divine nature than any miracle could be."[2]

Professor Jackson has avowedly done some thinking on theological problems; but he seems to have done little on this. The thesis must obviously

[1] As cited by Professor Foakes-Jackson.

[2] *Christian Difficulties in the Second and Twentieth Centuries*, 1903, p. 117.

take the form: "Jesus as presented in the gospels is unquestionably sinless"; and, if there is to be any argument at all, "sin" must be defined in the ordinary "Christian" sense, as including angry passions, injustice, deflection from truth, et cetera. Either, then, all ordinary verbal usage is flatly defied, or it follows that the alleged action of Jesus to Judas, his description of opponents as "a brood of vipers" and "children of the devil," his account of previous teachers as "thieves and robbers," his gross misrepresentation of Rabbinical teaching in the matter of "Corban," his giving over to perdition all communities which do not blindly receive his disciples, his description of the Gentiles as "dogs," his quibbling about the tribute to Cæsar—all his deflections from the code of temperance and gentleness and scrupulosity of speech which is put in his mouth—are removed from the category of "sins" *because he claimed to be the Son of God.*[1]

It is an absolute logical circle—unless we are to understand that the actions specified would not be "sins" on the part of an ordinary man. Until that is seriously asserted, the argument is at an end. *Is* it seriously asserted?

In the face of such impercipience of the meaning of words, on the part of a scholarly and temperate theologian, it is necessary to point out to the normal reader that the tactic of Churchmen in this matter is a mere stultification of the form of reasoning they profess to apply.

To say that the gospel Jesus is a "unique" figure

[1] The old orthodox dogma expressly rested on that ground. Edward Irving was vehemently censured because he taught that the human body of Jesus was "sinful matter," though that was logically implied in the dogma of Christ's humanity. See Mrs. Oliphant's *Life of Irving.*

is to conceal the issue by an ambiguous term. Strictly speaking, *every* human being, and equally every notable fictitious character, is unique. The word is, even for ordinary purposes, as applicable to Queen Elizabeth, Mary Queen of Scots, Queen Victoria, or George the Third, as to Socrates, Plato, Alexander, or Napoleon. If we are to understand uniqueness as predicated of Jesus in point of sinlessness in comparison with all other men, our negation must be instant. The gospel Jesus is no more sinless, no more unique, than the historical Socrates, and less so than the non-historical Buddha or Lycurgus, to say nothing of the many human beings who have never resorted to the vituperative language put in the mouth of the gospel Jesus.

There is reason to think that the concept of "sinlessness" still arises for many Christians, as regards Jesus, in respect of his celibacy. That primitive conception, however, belonging as it does to the ethic of savagery, is not to be supposed to constitute the position of theologians who make the assertion of Professor Foakes-Jackson. Buddhists argue that the celibacy of Jesus, who is never supposed to have had sex feeling, is as nothing beside the *renunciation* of Buddha.

The summary of the debate, so far, must be that the doctrine of the sinlessness of Jesus is not only a moral perversity in itself but a fruitful source of perversion in Christian history—partly comparable in this regard to the sainting of the Peter of the Denial Story and the Ananias story, and the David of the Old Testament. The central factor is just the religious assumption that what the religious mind conceives as divine *must* be "righteous"; an assumption which has yielded the

mass of deified unrighteousness constituting so large a part of ancient literature—Indian, Persian, Babylonian, Egyptian, Hebrew, Greek, Roman, and Christian.

It is in fairness to be noted, of course, that a conviction of the historicity and supernormal importance of the gospel Jesus has been and is held by many who put no thesis of "sinlessness," and indeed recognize that such a thesis in effect cancels that of historicity, inasmuch as it alleges, as Professor Foakes-Jackson expressly claims, "miracle." Renan, who did so much to establish the Neo-Unitarian sentiment on the subject, shocked his more religious readers by actually representing Jesus as committing "pious fraud" in the matter of thaumaturgy in general and the raising of Lazarus in particular;[1] even as Mr. Middleton Murry, combining the positions of De Quincey and Dr. Schweitzer, alleges what one critic describes as a "frame-up" between Jesus and Judas to bring on the Crucifixion.

And Shelley, who was visibly influenced by Rousseau, sets forth in his posthumous 'Essay on Christianity' a glowing picture of a noble-minded and philosophic philanthropist who nevertheless "did what every other reformer who has produced any considerable effect upon the world has done. He accommodated his doctrines to the prepossessions of those whom he addressed.....Like a skilful orator (see Cicero, *De Oratore*), he secures the prejudices of his auditors, and induces them, by his professions of sympathy with their feelings, to enter with a willing mind into the exposition of

[1] See the complaints of Tulloch, *Lectures on M. Renan's "Life of Jesus,"* 1864, pp. 152–4.

his own.....Let not this practice be considered as an unworthy artifice.....All reformers have been compelled to practise this misrepresentation of their own true feelings and opinions."[1]

The "misrepresentation" thus alleged and defended by Shelley (who, like the modern biographical school, was quite sure he could see the authentic amid the unauthentic elements in the gospels) consisted in professing to maintain to the uttermost the traditionary Law. To get a favourable hearing Jesus had to profess devout orthodoxy. "Having produced this favourable disposition of mind, Jesus Christ proceeds to qualify, and finally to abrogate, the system of the Jewish law." While this may have satisfied Shelley as a feature in the character of an admirable reformer, it will hardly give satisfaction to the biographical school to-day, and will not by the official school be embodied in the claim of "sinlessness."

In the end Renan was driven by the protests of sympathetic and other readers to modify *his* "soft impeachment" of benevolent fraud. But the apriorist who, like Shelley and Renan and Mr. Murry, clings to his concept of an actual Jesus, will do well to ask himself whether at many points he will not suffer more disillusionment from the effort to account in detail for the gospel record in terms of a faultless personality than from the acceptance of a myth theory which dismisses alike disparagement and idolization.

With "sinlessness," in the old theology, was associated the concept of resistance to temptation

[1] *Selected Prose Works of Shelley*, ed. by H. S. Salt, R. P. A., pp. 162-3. It is difficult to date Shelley's "Essay." Mr. Salt rightly thinks it was written "at a date considerably later than that usually assigned to it—viz., the year 1815."

of a supernormal kind. But that too yields less than nothing for the biographical position. The biographical method is latterly working itself out in such futilities as the attempt to establish the order of "the Lord's" sensations in the Temptation —which is at length admitted to be imaginary— and to explain the story of the no less obviously mythic Transfiguration by subsuming the "experience" of Peter, who *must* have "imagined" that. The myth theory explains the Temptation story as an application of an Eastern myth made widely current by striking pictograms and by poetry, and anciently told of Jupiter, of Olympus, of Dionysos, and of Apollo.[1] The historicists still prefer to ascribe the invention to "the Lord."

The story of the Transfiguration was long ago explained[2] as one of the usual gospel transferences to the new Messiah of Old Testament marvels— the original being Exodus xxiv, 12–18, of which the very "after six days" is duplicated. Harnack assures us, nevertheless, that it is "a true piece of Peter's reminiscences," and that the very puerility of the remark, "It is good for us to be here," is "also authentic and characteristic." Which is the worse puerility? Peter has really suffered more than his fair share at the hands of the interpolators and commentators from first to last. The myth theory deals with him more kindly!

§ 4. *The Value of "Impression"*

When we consider the argument of Dr. Burkitt

[1] See *Christianity and Mythology*, 2nd ed., p. 318 *sq.*

[2] The author has elsewhere suggested (*C. and M.*, p. 361) that the Transfiguration may have been connected with the mystery drama.

under its secondary aspect, dismissing for the moment the logical, and considering only the claimed "impression" made by the inferred Personality, there arises the question, What was the character and what the calibre of the people alleged to have been so impressed, to such ends? And the answer surely must be: Feeble brains, childlike characters. An evangelist moved to wilful fiction by the greatness of his "impression" is an odd voucher for the quality of the impact. Of what significance were the impressions which produced the mass of the apocryphal Gospels and Acts? Did not these reach the largest audience of all?

As it happens, there is a large consensus among the defenders of the faith as to the poverty of the human material on the Gentile Christian side. Professor Foakes-Jackson is very explicit on that point: "Not without reason does Paul call the Corinthians 'babes.'" In fairness, he would doubtless accept equally the characterization of the "foolish Galatians"—who used, before 1914, to be indicated as the peccantly "Celtic" element in early Christian Greece. The Professor even becomes momentarily sociological on the subject. "The degenerate provincial under the Roman rule had no [civic] incentives to manliness. Civil duty and patriotism, almost the only good things [!] his ancestral religion had inculcated, were no longer possible *under a strong paternal government*.....The free man was a slave at heart....."

On the other hand, to the Professor's eye, "the Jewish believer possessed many advantages over his Gentile brother." Was not he, then, equally "under a strong paternal government"? The

theorem cannot stand; and we can but suppose that the Professor sees in Jewish *fanaticism* an element of "strength" passed on to Christianity. But what does he make of the disappearance of Galilee from the Christian horizons after the gospels? And what now becomes of the claim that Hellenistic elements were markedly present all along in the church of Jerusalem? Were Hellenes there less slaves than in Greece?

We had better face the question for ourselves, and ask whether the narrative of the Acts exhibits a community more notable for mental capacity or veracity than the Greek recipients of the Pauline letters. And the difficulty of finding the evidence is insuperable. There is in fact something highly anomalous in an official theologian's claim that, while the Gentile Christians "impressed" by Paul were poor stuff, the Jewish Christians impressed by the apostles were much better. For what shadow of evidence have we of high moral and mental qualities in the alleged apostles themselves? Are they not exhibited in the gospels as mostly impercipient, "materialistic," avid of a high place in the New Jerusalem; the best of them, the selected three, sleeping when their Master told them he was in his utmost trial?

An "impression" averred to have been made on and by such spirits is truly a singular guarantee for supernormal moral and intellectual qualifications in the "unknown X" who is claimed to have necessarily made it. One of the many dilemmas of the biographical school is the declaration of the records that Jesus failed at Nazareth; won a great hold in Galilee, and then wholly lost it; entered Jerusalem in triumph and within a few days was discarded for Barabbas. How did the impression

so fluctuate?[1] That question, so readily answered by the myth theory in terms of purposive narratives belonging to a period of strife between Jew and Gentile Christists, is unanswerable on the "Personality" theory.

And the sum of the whole dispute is that the impressionists would do well to check their entire dialectic process from the beginning, analyse their psychosis, and really examine the myth theory in detail instead of relying on the simple polemic of the unstudious champions who assure them that it is absurd, "exploded," "a denial of all historic truth," an aberration, a parallel to the Baconian theory, and all the rest of it. Even this brief scrutiny may serve to show which side is doing the aberration, and reducing its own case to absurdity.

§ 5. *The Method of Bluster*

In case the foregoing account of current polemic against the myth theory should be deprecated as external to serious debate, it is expedient to note how the matter has been quite recently handled by a popular divine of some scholarly status. It is after praising Plato because, "at the point where abstract ratiocination could go no further, he fell back on Myth," that Canon Streeter, in his work entitled 'Reality,' thus discourses :—

"Unfortunately for our present purpose the word 'myth' has been fatally injured by the foolish people who talk of the

[1] It might be argued that such fluctuation is an argument for historicity, in view of the fact that Edward Irving had immense popular success before his collapse. But Irving made his impression by great expansive eloquence ; and this is never alleged of the gospel Jesus. Irving, finally, was deposed by his underlings in a state of physical decay and subdued volition, which will not be admitted by Christists to have existed in the case of their Lord.

'Christ-myth,' with the implication that Jesus either never lived or that we know next to nothing of Him. These ought not to be taken seriously. Some of them, never having given real study to the subject (or lacking the equipment to do so if they would), speak from second-hand or superficial knowledge; others are of that class—unfortunately, not a small one—who feed an unconscious egoism by championing some ingenious paradox. Competent scholars, here and in Germany, have been at pains to publish refutations of their arguments; but, like those who maintain that Shakespeare was Bacon, or that the British are the Lost Tribes, they are impervious to refutation."[1]

Any one who cares to peruse the preceding part of the work cited, which gives an edifying account of the Rev. Canon's intellectual career, and the subsequent part, which reveals his philosophic calibre, will be able to realize the mentality of this Christian champion, who, it should be noted, is deeply impressed with the importance of loving our neighbour as ourself. To have interfered fatally with the rev. gentleman's operations on the word "myth" would seem to be something of a public service on the part of the mythicists.

Leaving his evangelistic personalities to bear their fit fruit, we have first to note that he has entirely misinformed himself as to the publication of "confutations" of the myth theory by competent scholars who, as he protests, ought not to have done it. Apart from the recent work of Professor Goguel, which has been examined above, there has been no attempt at confutation that has not been rebutted thrice over in respect of its ignorance of the subject, its fallacies, and its misrepresentations. Dr. Conybeare, the most prominent English assailant, had made no adequate study either of anthropology or of mythology, holding as he did

[1] Work cited, pp. 52–3.

that totems are gods ; and he made a series of fatal misstatements of fact concerning the New Testament narratives which proved his slight acquaintance with these. To the rebuttals of his attack there has been no answer from the biographical school. To the rebuttal by Dr. W. B. Smith, it is safe to say, Canon Streeter is wholly incompetent to reply.

The allusion to the Baconian theory is characteristic of the method of ignorance. The Baconian theory *has* been repeatedly confuted, by strictly inductive argument, and further by the demonstration that its supporters are unqualified in respect of knowledge of Elizabethan literature and vocabulary. But it would again be safe to say that a comparatively sane Baconian, who "knows his silly business," could make short work of the mere bluster of opponents who, like Canon Streeter, know even less than he.

The special charm of the situation is that the dialectic procedure of the Baconians is exactly that of the apriorists in the matter of the gospel story. Both alike proceed on a presupposition. As the Christian (and other) historicists assume that there *must* have been a marvellous Personality to account for the "impression" registered by the evangelists and the rise of the Christian Church, so the Baconians decide that there *must* have been a lawyer and a classical scholar and a trained philosopher behind the Plays, Poems, and Sonnets; and that these *cannot* have been the work of a "mere" man of the theatre, who had only a common schooling at Stratford-on-Avon.[1] Neither

[1] Of course the champions of the historicity of Jesus can reply that *they* make no difficulty of the rustic upbringing of the gospel Jesus.

school pays any loyalty to induction. And both are wont to ignore all the arguments against them, and to compensate themselves for the weakness of their case by jeering at their opponents. Canon Streeter has quite the Baconian manner, temper, and preparation. Of the necessary preparation in anthropology, mythology, and hierology, he seems to be more innocent than was Dr. Conybeare.

The myth theorists, then, must be content not to seek their reputation in the Canon's mouth. He doubtless avails much for the comfort of the faithful, though the serious scholars of the Church do not pay him the compliment of imitating his tone and tactics. It is to be recorded, on the other hand, that a number of men of letters do exactly copy his tone and attitude. On the recent appearance of the late Dr. Georg Brandes' work on 'The Jesus Saga' in an American translation, several of our literary journalists disposed of the matter by pouring scorn on all such doctrine, and by citing Mr. H. G. Wells and Dr. Eduard Meyer as historical authorities whose mere opinion outweighed all argument.

Those who perused the historical work entitled 'England,' published by Dr. Eduard Meyer during the war, can tell how much weight now attaches, for instructed readers, to his historical judgment—a matter not to be further laboured by those who know of his sad personal experience. Of the authority of Mr. Wells it is more difficult to speak. Many readers, it is understood, find in his distillation of history a species of truth not previously attained. Yet even that somewhat lightly acquired conviction, on the part of readers who have *not* extensively sought to ascertain the results of all other research, scarcely warrants the inference that the mere opinion of Mr. Wells outweighs that of

the long series of eminent Dutch experts, Pierson, Loman, Bolland, and Professor Van den Bergh van Eysinga, and of Professor W. B. Smith, Professor Arthur Drews, Dr. Couchoud, and Dr. Brandes, as to whether Christianity *could* have arisen without there being a real personage answering to the gospel Jesus—barring the large element of myth that even Mr. Wells is understood to find in the gospels.

And if the adherents of Mr. Wells continue to treat his *ipse dixit* as decisive in such a matter, it may even be found necessary to suggest to them that their own dialectic smacks more of incompetence and presumption than of authority. They are sitting in the seat of judgment without either scholarly or sociological qualification. Mr. Alfred Noyes is a charming poet, with a gift of melody outgoing at times that of Swinburne; but he is not a thinker, and his à priori opinion on the myth theory has no more value than would attach to his opinion on the Law of Rent.

But let us not seem to suggest that the unlearned laity, or even the less scrupulous of the clerical defenders of the faith, alone resort to the cheapest devices of defence. A number of years ago, Dean Inge did the present writer the unmerited honour of likening him to the Abbé Loisy, of all men, as being of the class of negligible speculators. This because M. Loisy, in the way of his scrupulous research, had abandoned many items in the gospels as unhistorical. More recently, the same distinguished publicist, faced by the new propugnation of the myth theory at the hands of Brandes, supposed himself to dispose of the whole matter by noting that no scholar of the first rank had accepted it. Loisy is admittedly a scholar of the very first

rank. And the Dean had dismissed him as of no account in that he outwent most other specialists in disintegrating the gospel text. Yet he had been preceded by Dutch experts of a scholarly rank certainly higher (in these matters) than Dean Inge's—experts who had gone the whole length of the myth theory. The Dean might reasonably have dismissed any man's theory, irrespective of scholarship, on the score that it was ill reasoned. For the question is not ultimately one of scholarship but of argument, with all the data of the scholars laid on the table. But in the first instance he treated Loisy's scholarship as counting for nothing in support of his views; in the second he affects to settle the question by claiming that the best scholars do not go the whole way of the myth theory.

It would be idle indeed to expect eminent and *mature* clerical scholars, challenged by the results of other scholars, to admit that they have passed their whole lives under a delusion. But it might seem no extravagant exigence to claim that English clerics of high standing and liberal repute, professing to conform to the normal standards of critical rectitude, should cease thus to flout them in this particular matter.

Already when Schweitzer wrote, without acceptance of the myth theory, the "liberal biographical" view of the Jesus problem was by his confident account reduced to wreck. That is to say, the *bulk* of the gospel narratives was seen to be what the myth theory posited as to the central figure. To-day not only is the myth theory accepted and defended anew by an eminent Dutch Professor, but Professor Bultmann of Marburg has gone so far in concession to the argument

from textual analysis that he avowedly finds no recognizable "Personality" left. If Loisy in the past was of no account, with all his special scholarship, Bultmann must be of no account for Dean Inge to-day, since he goes further than Loisy, though still holding to a shadowy "historical" Jesus. On what kind of personal qualification, then, does Dean Inge claim to deliver his judgments? Has he any higher principle than that of finding, as journalist, phrases of disparagement for all who imperil the status of the official creed, of which so many of his colleagues doubt his acceptance?

§ 6. *Conclusion*

Sometimes one is tempted to meet Hegel's sophism, "Religion is the Place of Truth," with the flat contrary: "Religion is the Place of False Spirits," so constantly is sophistry at work in its service. But that would only be to answer rhetoric with rhetoric. The true summary is just that religion is the Great Backyard of the Blundering Spirit of Man; and that whereas the more enlightened of the specialists already see how the past history of their subject is but a vast record of organized delusion, they are still deaf and blind to the great lesson of human mental experience, that truth is to be found only by utter submission to the law of discovery.

A poet duly indifferent to the primary historic fact might make an effect by using the Jesus Legend to show how a hero slain for proclaiming new truth became the God of a Church whose main business ever since has been to slay all new truth, banning and blocking in turn the sciences of medicine, geography, astronomy, geology,

biology, anthropology, mythology, hierology, and the science of Christology itself. But of course it is not merely in religion that Man, the Mole, execrates all new light so long as he can expel it. His so-called martyrdom is the record of his blindness: his animal conviction that what he feels must be true. It is only his rebel seers who save him.

The lines of reasoning which have been combated in the preceding pages exhibit the common formula of all error—assumption without due inductive check. Herein the present process of opinion on religious matters is but a belated duplication of the process of scientific opinion in general. As to astronomy, "The radical defect of all solar systems previous to the time of Kepler (1609 A.D.) was the slavish yielding to Plato's dictum demanding uniform circular motion for the planets, and the consequent evolution of the epicycle, which was fatal to any conception of a dynamical theory."[1] Only with Kepler and Newton did induction come into its own.

The accomplished expert just cited has pronounced that Newton's *Principia* is "the highest example of inductive reasoning ever produced." A no less competent expert in the theological field has declared in regard to the debates on the Apocalypse in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, that "wildest and most fantastic of all are the English commentaries of this period,"[2] among which are the works of Napier of Merchiston and Sir Isaac Newton (1593 and 1732). These illustrious men, among the greatest

[1] Professor George Forbes, *History of Astronomy*, 1909, p. 26.
[2] Professor Bousset in *Encyc. Biblica*, art. "Apocalypse."

of their times in respect of the free scientific use of their minds, played thrall to authority in matters of religion, and in that field outwent in obscurantism even their professional rivals.

If anything could shake the confidence, alike of our theological scholars and our unlearned literary laymen, in their traditionism, that record should surely suffice. The spectacle of mighty faculties reduced to puerility by blind adherence to a presupposition, when the same faculties were able to move mountains by turning away from traditionism to loyal induction, might surely serve to warn the multitude of lesser men of the penalty of all refusal to do their thinking under scientific law. Newton stands alternately pillared and pilloried as the greatest physicist and the foolishest commentator of his time. Most of us easily escape either form of notice, whether we are right or wrong. But the mass of modern academic scholarship, as regards the problem of Christian Origins, is in a fair way to be arraigned by posterity for inability to learn the main lesson of all scientific progress.

Outside of the purely mathematical sciences, where emotion is at a discount, nothing seems to avail to prepare men to look genially at what claims to be a new truth, and "as a stranger give it welcome." We are now reading of the savage opposition offered to Lister and his discovery of antiseptic methods in surgery. That was but a generation ago: to-day the method is high orthodoxy in the profession.

It is the same story, in a worse degree, in the literary "sciences," wherever a habit of mind and an academic teaching have become well settled. In Shakespearology the academic orthodox operate

their creed exactly in the fashion of the Baconians (whom *they* did nothing to confute), assuming that all the plays in the Folio *must* be of Shakespeare's planning, and must be so envisaged, even when the ground has been dug from beneath the dogma by the detached avowals of generations of critics. Equally, of course, the Sonnets *must* be all Shakespeare's, and 126 of them addressed to one man. The very theologians, having "disintegrated" the Pentateuch and the Psalms and Isaiah and critically scanned the whole Old Testament field, may comment: "We, the so-called unprogressive profession, have been far in advance of lay criticism in its handling of *its* non-sacrosanct problems."

We can but say, with the dramatized Galileo: "Yet it moves." Some rationalists have fought in the ranks of tradition; while some theologians have been found to see in the scientific induction a discovery that liberates them from a vast perplexity. Every extension of Christian scholarly research supplies light that makes clearer the way of the myth theorist. Even as certain supernaturalists made decisive steps in the analysis of the Pentateuch when some so-called rationalists were refusing to see the sutures of documents, clerical textual-analysts, albeit strangely blind to some salient phenomena, have prepared the way for the inductive analysis which reduces all elements of the gospels to their purposes, and eliminates the "Personality."

Ultimately, the solution will be the product of all the honest labour that has been spent on it, whether by traditionists or by untrammelled rationalists. That the chief stress of vituperation should meantime fall on those who proclaim the

law of science as the sole authority to be recognized is in the ordinary way of culture history.

Of course they will be told, as by the Very Reverend Dean Inge, that they are rooting-out the elements which cause society to cohere ; that they are playing into the hands of the Bolshevists, who have in their mindless and futile way sought to suppress religion even as religion has normally striven to suppress all dissent from *its* rule. The Dean does not rede his rune. Bolshevism has arisen and wrought its crimes in the very area of the most indurated form of the Christian religion ; and in the name of that religion were wrought the most atrocious wars of a thousand years, as the Dean has himself avowed. It is not by taking the Oath to hate Science, any more than by taking the Oath to hate the Demos, that civilization will be saved.

A poet who, being a great innovating rhythmist, necessarily missed general recognition as such in his lifetime, has sung for us the answer to the cry that the world has lost its hope with the sinking of the great ship Immortality :—

> Thousands of wings about her bows
> As she cast away the deep,
> The morning star swung from a spar
> And every sail asleep.....
>
> No frothings in your purple wake
> On the lone path to the pole ;
> White as the spread of sail on her
> That lent wings to your soul.....
>
> *Apollo.*
>
> What was her build, that boat of yours,
> So proud upon the sea ?
> What was her make of hull and deck ?
> What suit of sails had she ?

Seaman.

Her stretch of sail so white, so white,
By no man's hand unfurled,
Was Heaven!

Apollo.

And the decks you kept so bright?

Seaman.

For us, the bustling World.

Apollo.

And the holds and cockpit out of sight,
Pitch dark and ill to smell,
Full of the friends of your delight?

Seaman.

That was the pit of Hell!

We have read, what the traditionists will not percipiently read, the history of the world ruled by that tradition: we have

Beheld the horror of those decks
Bloodied with mystic wine;

and, knowing that man has never truly lived well by delusion, we are reasonably sure that he never can. But in that creed there is nothing of revolution: it is the message of Evolution, which the very hierophants are quaintly beginning to profess to act upon—this in the very act of resistance. For even they build better than they know, carried as they are on the flood of change.

The tides of men obey a ghost,
The ghost of the unborn;[1]

even when they are paying fealty to the Man-made phantoms of the past.

Dr. Montefiore, best of Jews or Christians, after

[1] Herbert Trench, *Apollo and the Seaman*.

conceding the unreality of more than half the substance of the synoptics, turns away from the toppling ruin to assure himself and us that genius in a teaching is not a matter of the cogitable content, and that here we have a something over and above the echoed written word, a kind of "surplus value" not known even to Marxian economics. And that elusive *x*, he thinks, "we need," and cannot do without. Yet Dr. Montefiore must be aware that there are now living millions of instructed men who have not his "need"; who face the universe without dreaming of valuations in terms of the religious commonplaces of antiquity, and who have ceased to hold his inherited and inculcated intuition of a "Father" in the skies. Such homily cannot avail for really reasoning men.

And the negative holds equally of sheer literary special pleading. Mr. Middleton Murry, a generous spirit, thinks to save the legend by eloquent dithyramb. Jesus, he tells us, gave his life because men would not believe his teaching, which conveyed a "mystery" that Jesus himself "could not expound." Alas, when millions of millions of men have given their lives through the æons without a thought of claiming divine Sonship, what signifies the motive or the meed? Sadder, surely, is the thought of the millions upon millions who in the ages were brought to their death as sacrifices in their own despite, to "take away the sin of the world."

The late James Darmesteter, another generous spirit, more plausibly declared that Jeanne Darc was a worthier martyr than the gospel Jesus. Are such debates worth waging, after the World War?

Saner and fruitfuller, surely, is the effort to

know aright what the world's history has actually been, how things really went, what is false and what is true; and thereupon to think out what for men is right action now, in the light of knowledge and thought, not of traditionist homily and the worship of the past. Then, perhaps, we might pretend to settle "the nicely calculated less or more" of real or imaginary personal merit—if we still thought it fit to try.

EPILOGUE

THE myth theory, being a process of scientific induction from a multiplicity of data, is far from having reached a stage that can be called "completion." Like every truly scientific hypothesis, it remains under revision and development. In the foregoing pages many of its aspects are not even indicated; and he who would master it must go further afield. But it may be fitting to suggest here a possible development, not previously mooted.

Professor W. B. Smith has called attention to the outstanding but little-recognized fact that Galilee, which plays so great a part in the gospels, wholly disappears from the story of the propaganda and the church-building of the cult, after it is told in Acts (ix, 31) that "then had the churches rest through all Galilee," and that "the word..... began from Galilee." On the other hand, Dr. Burkitt avows, several times over, that "*there never were any Christians in Galilee till the days when Christians were to be found in every corner of the Empire.*"[1] Yet he never attempts any solution of the immense contradiction in the Christian record that is involved in this avowal. Theologians pass over such profoundly perplexing matters as they pass over the equally striking fact that never, in the Epistles or the Apocalypse, is Jesus called "of Nazareth," or "Nazirite," or "Nazarene." Of such

[1] *Christian Beginnings*, p. 84. Cp. pp. 76, 89, 97.

phenomena, ignored by the historicists, the myth theory has to take account.

The present writer (once described in the *Hibbert Journal* as being an à priori denier of the historicity of Jesus) actually spent a long time in trying to construct a working theorem of *three* possible historical Jesuses ; one the elusive Jesus of the Talmud, first dated under Alexander Jannæus ; one a Nazirite ; one not a Nazirite, and therefore declared to be "of Nazareth," by way of deflecting the other term. The theorem could not be carried beyond the stage of unsupported hypothesis, and had to be abandoned. But the location of the bulk of the narrative part of the synoptic gospels in Galilee raises for the myth theorist the question, Why that location, when there was no subsisting Galilean Church?

There suggests itself the hypothesis that there may have been a "wonder-working" Jesus of the district of Gennesareth, not a Teacher, not an utterer of *logia*, not the head of a band of Twelve Disciples, not crucified under Pontius Pilate, but just an oriental "faith-healer" who for a time made a local reputation, which later suggested to some of the cultists of the pre-Christian Jesus the idea of retrospectively using his repute to advantage their cult ; of which the mystic sacrament was the "headstone of the corner." Such an enterprise would involve the invention of many "signs and wonders," as later it involved the compilation of *logia Jesou*.

Suppose, again, that such a rustic wonder-worker had lent himself to selection as the "Jesus Bar-Abbas"—Jesus the Son of the Father—of an ancient Palestinian cult, which could better survive in Galilee, and perhaps in Samaria (the land of

Joshua tradition), than in Judea; a rite which, once one of annual human sacrifice,[1] had become exoterically one of mock sacrifice, and so connected externally with the sacramental cult, which had been primarily one of actual human sacrifice. The repute of the wonder-worker might thus locally aggrandize Jesuism.

The main point of the hypothesis is that it would account for the preservation in the gospels, at a later stage, of a Galilean background. Its weak point obviously is that if the Bar-Abbas rite had survived chiefly in Galilee, that basis might suffice without any prominent wonder-worker. An annual selection, such as apparently took place at Alexandria,[2] might suffice to create a Galilean vogue for the name. But a particular reputation, embodying tales of healing, would conceivably serve better to act as a nucleus for the later legend.

Possibly some "historicist" might be content with such a hypothesis if it were expanded to include an *actual* sacrifice of a Bar-Abbas victim at some time of social tumult, the kind of situation in which, we know, ancient ritual practices could be horribly revived—as in the child-sacrifices of Carthage. The record of such a sacrifice in Galilee would of course not serve the purposes of the later developed cult of Jesus the Christ. That had to be staged at Jerusalem and connected with the Roman imperium. The story of an actual Galilean sacrifice, the work of a fanatical peasantry, would have to be suppressed for evangelistic purposes; even if it were known to have taken place.

A shadowy hypothesis, truly, yielding no "Per-

[1] See *The Jesus Problem*, pp. 32–39; and *Pagan Christs*, as there cited.

[2] See *The Jesus Problem*, as cited.

sonality" for the seekers after that. The Figure built up in the gospels is a manifold literary composite, answering to no imaginable individual. The hypothetical wonder-worker, the hypothetical Bar-Abbas, is to be conceived rather as an unbalanced than as a remarkable or gifted person. This is not a tracing of "the gospel Jesus" to an original: the "original" of that is an old God of folk-lore, without temple or priesthood, transformed by literate men into a Teacher as well as a miracle-working Messiah. But it suggests an explanation, not offered from the "historicist" side, of the location of so much of the gospel story in Galilee. As such it may be worth considering. It would account for, among other things, the text: "After I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee."

If the reader, cowed by the truculent negations of some of the anti-mythologists, should reply that there is no documentary ground for the hypothesis of a pre-Christian Jesus-cult, let him be assured that he has been deceived. There are grounds in Jewish lore, as well as in the Book of Zechariah, for the conviction that an ancient Jesus-cult underlies the legend of the admittedly unhistorical Joshua of the Old Testament. And these grounds are never examined by the defenders of the historicity of the gospel Jesus. Neither Jewish nor Christian commentators latterly face the fact that in Jewish "Talmudic" tradition there was a "Jesus, the Prince of the Presence," and a rite of "The Week of the Son,"[1] called by some "The Week of Jesus the Son."

As is noted in the margin of the Revised Version, "many very ancient authorities read *Jesus*"

[1] See *The Jesus Problem*, pp. 85–8, and *Pagan Christs*, pp. 162–7.

(= Joshua) for "the Lord" in the Epistle of Jude, verse 5; and, as has been pointed out by Mr. Thomas Whittaker, that passage, clearly alluding to Joshua, ascribes to him divine status. The existence of an ancient Jesus-cult within the Judaic sphere is thus indicated in the New Testament itself; and a collation of the passages in Exodus xxiii, 20–24; Joshua xxiv, 11, establishes Joshua as a divine figure, on a higher plane than Moses. And when he in turn (Josh. iv, 2) figures as choosing out twelve for his purposes, the parallel is tolerably significant.

The so-called "Gospel of the Twelve Holy Apostles," as preserved in the Syriac, begins thus:—

> "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus the Christ, the son of the living God, according as it is said by the Holy Spirit, I send an angel before his face, who shall prepare his way."

This is not said, as in the synoptics, of John the Baptist: of him there is no mention in the document. And it contains substantially the very expression used in Exodus xxiii, 20: "Behold I send an angel before thee, to keep thee by the way," which resolves itself into a prediction of the conquests of Joshua, the quite unhistorical personage of the book called by his name.

If, then, finally, the Book of Joshua is, as is generally admitted by scholars, wholly unhistorical, (1) on what name and what lore did the story proceed; and (2) if the entire Book of Joshua be an unhistorical priestly fabrication, why should not an equally unhistorical record have been compiled later concerning Jesus the Christ?

APPENDIX

THE PROBLEM OF "MARK"

I

THE theory of the priority of "Mark," weighed and rejected in the last century by Baur and Strauss, has had the fortune to be accepted by many modern rationalists on the strength of the general consensus of German and English theologians, with small concern to weigh the arguments which countervail it. Broadly speaking, the consensus stands simply for the cumulative movement towards the biographical as opposed to the supernaturalist standpoint. The simple fact that Mark has no Birth Story, no Virgin Birth, naturally appeals, first to the Unitarian, and next to the rationalist, as indicating an early writing.[1] It is on the presumption thus set up that the analytical process explaining the concurrences of the other synoptics as borrowings from Mark confidently proceeds. Yet most of those who carry it on are agreed in conceding that a prior gospel underlies all three synoptics—a datum which invalidates a multitude of the special textual arguments for Mark's priority.

For the rationalist student, it cannot be too

[1] "Many have regarded the absence of any sketch of the Saviour's infancy and childhood in Mark as a conclusive proof of the priority of his Gospel" (Bleek, *Introd. to N. T.*, Eng. tr., 1869, i, 265).

clearly affirmed, the question has only a subsidiary importance. The order of production of the gospels, which for the theologian raises far-reaching problems, is for scientific criticism just a matter of literary history. The question of the credibility of any or all of the gospel records is to be settled by tests which apply irrespectively of the order in which the documents are supposed to be compiled. It is first the Unitarian, and next the "orthodox" theologian who is now silently adopting the Unitarian standpoint, that have "an axe to grind." For them, Mark represents the chief refuge for the belief in the simple "historicity" of Jesus—the residual belief that a *man* Jesus really did suffer trial and crucifixion, whether or not he worked miracles.

Long ago this facile structure of hypothesis was freshly rent from within the biographical school by the definite pronouncement of Loisy (summing up on grounds already urged in the time of Eusebius) that the existing gospel according to Mark *cannot* have been penned by a disciple of Peter; and by the weighty conclusion of Schmiedel that Peter never was at Rome—another old opinion, very definitely expressed by Scaliger. It is well to keep in view also the fact that a large majority of critics have agreed that the account of "Mark" given by Papias cannot apply to the gospel as it stands. On those points writers like Dr. Major[1] are prudently silent. But the priority thesis may still claim to stand irrespective of the question of authorship, proceeding as it does on structural aspects of the text in comparison with those of Matthew and Luke. The nature of the argument may be gathered from three cases, specially stressed

[1] See his *Jesus by an Eye-Witness*, 1925.

for the priority theory as against the view that Mark partly combines the texts of Matthew and Luke.

1. Dr. Abbott notes that the Greek of Mark xii, 1–11, contains all the words, excepting four of no importance, which are common to the parallel passages, Mt. xxi, 33–44; Lk. xx, 9–18. *If* Mark was a mere compiler, it is argued, he had to "write a narrative graphic, *abrupt*, and in all respects the opposite of artificial," yet embracing all the words he found common to the other two. This, it is contended, is an impossible strain of artifice.

2. Dr. J. E. Carpenter similarly handles the parallel passages Mk. xi, 2–3; Mt. xxi, 2–3; Luke xix, 30–31, printing Mark's sentences so as to show the Luke matter in italics, the Matthew matter in spaced type, and Mark's own in ordinary type. Thus we get:—

Go your way into the village that is *over against you* and straightway *as ye enter* into it, *ye shall find a colt tied whereon no man ever yet sat: loose him and bring him.* And if any one say unto you, *Why* do *ye* this? say ye, *The Lord hath need of him,* and straightway he will send him back hither.

Here, on the compilation theory, says Dr. Carpenter, "the epitomizer has endeavoured to combine the two stories, by taking a clause from one, and two words from the other, alternately. Can anything be more artificial?"

3. Mr. Robinson Smith, an able rationalistic writer, marshals ('Solution of the Synoptic Problem'; Watts, 1920, p. 10) a set of twenty-two passages in which Mark combines phrases that occur singly in Matthew and Luke. They are not all strictly analogous combinations, some of the phrases being important, some mere tautologies; but two samples will indicate the argument:—

a. At even, when the sun did set (Mk. i, 32). Mt. (viii, 16) takes the first clause, Lk. (iv, 10) the second.

b. And a great multitude from Galilee followed; and from Judæa, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and beyond Jordan, and about Tyre and Sidon (Mk. iii, 7–8). Matthew (iv, 25) has: "And there followed him great multitudes from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judæa and beyond Jordan." Luke (vi, 17) has: "And a great multitude of his disciples, and a great number of the people from all Judæa and Jerusalem, and the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon."

Mr. Smith's thesis is, "that no writer would have assembled these.....phrases from two other writers, whereas it was quite natural that two writers should have taken one one part and the other the other from their original, Mk." I confidently submit that, on the contrary, the natural inference is the other way about. On what probable grounds should Matthew and Luke respectively pick out from Mark certain regional names, each leaving the other in possession of a few others? That the Judaizing Matthew should ignore Tyre and Sidon is intelligible; but that would be his attitude whether he had seen Mark or not. Conceivably, Luke *might* be disposed to omit Galilee; but he would on his own Gentilizing grounds be ready to name Tyre and Sidon. And why should he ignore Idumea? The reasonable inference is that Mark, who so often heightens a description, was here combining the others, and adding Idumea.

And when we turn to the first sample, "what could be more artificial," as Dr. Carpenter would say, than the assumed agreement of Matthew and Luke each to take one clause from i, 32: "at even,

when the sun did set"?[1] The same procedure is imputed over Mk. x, 29:—"For my sake and for the gospel's sake"; Mt. (xix, 29) having only "for my name's sake," and Lk. (xviii, 29) "for the kingdom-of-God's sake." The theory that in a whole series of such cases Matthew picked out one of a pair or set of Mark's phrases, and that Luke then came and scrupulously took *only* what was left, is nothing short of grotesque, when we remember in what a multitude of cases Matthew and Luke verbally coincide. Only the need for a new argument to prove the priority of Mark could set a thoughtful scholar on such a hypothesis.

And the argument of Dr. Abbott and Dr. Carpenter is no sounder. Dr. Abbott's, in the case of the parable of the vineyard, turns upon the *assumption* that Mark's narrative is "in all respects the opposite of artificial," when that is the very thing to be proved! Any unbiased reader, collating the three passages, will pronounce that not only are Matthew and Luke at least as "graphic" as Mark, but Mark's conclusion: "*And*

[1] Dr. Major (p. 37) argues that "Mark's double phrase brings out what *only one who was present would remember.* The evening was the evening of the Sabbath"; and as Jews they could not bring their sick till the Sabbath was over. This, like so many of Dr. Major's arguments, is over sixty years old (Bleek's *Introd.*, Eng. tr., 1869, i, 313); but the old plea that Matthew and Luke "might *unintentionally* have divided [Mark's] fuller expression between them" is more circumspect than Mr. Smith's. The answer to the whole "eye-witness" argument here, however, is that the context tells nothing of a Sabbath day. Nor is that hypothesis needed: the inference is simply that the sick were to be carried only in the cool of the evening. And when Mark combines "brought unto him all that were sick and them that were possessed with devils," where Mt. viii, 16, has "brought.....many possessed with devils and he.....healed all that were sick," and Lk. iv, 40, has only "any sick with divers diseases," the theory of a "turn about" choice on the part of Matthew and Luke becomes fantastic.

they sought to lay hold on him: *and* they feared the multitude; for they perceived that he spake the parable against them; *and* they left him and went away," is flat and dull, and is perfectly conceivable as the bald curtailment of a compiler; though Mark is not *always* a mere compiler. To seek to salve such bald matter as "abrupt" is vain reasoning.

Dr. Carpenter's claim is equally nugatory. *If* Mark's story be artificial, considered as a copy from Luke, with phrases from Matthew, then Luke's and Matthew's are equally artificial, considered as modifications of Mark. On the face of the case, the most "natural" theory would be that Matthew's version is the first, as being by far the simplest; that one of the others was concerned to elaborate it; and that Mark's "And they said unto them even as Jesus had said" is more like a modification of Luke's "And they said, The Lord hath need of him," than vice versa. To seek to make out Mark unartificial is just to throw the charge across to Luke; and when Mark is visibly more artificial than Matthew, that tactic comes to nothing. What is more, Dr. Carpenter has discounted his argument in advance by taking up the position that "either the Gospel which was produced first was employed by the authors of the other two, *or the three Gospels were based upon some common Greek source. This latter view seems best to meet the conditions of the case*" ('First Three Gospels,' 3rd ed., pp. 176–7). On that view, what becomes of the points we have discussed?

The careful and temperate argumentation of Professor Burkitt in his 'Gospel History and its Transmission' avoids such contradictions; but that, too, fails to satisfy critical logic. The propo-

sition (p. 116) that "much of the wording of many whole paragraphs [in Luke] has simply been transferred from Mark" is plainly inconclusive, in that Mark may just as well have copied Luke. This counter-theory the Marcans never rightly face.

II

The outstanding critical shortcoming, indeed, of the large body of writers who maintain the priority of Mark, is that they almost invariably ignore the strong counter-arguments. It may be that some of their opponents are similarly remiss; but many have weighed the claims they contest; whereas the mere putting of particular pleas for Mark's priority without facing the contrary case is a sheer evasion of a critical problem. So far is the habit of special pleading carried that writers professing to give their readers a conspectus of the documentary evidence are commonly found suppressing the fact that Clement of Alexandria expressly declared the tradition of the oldest presbyters to be that the Gospel of Mark was written *after* "those which contained the genealogies" (Eusebius, 'Ec. Hist.,' vi, 14). Dr. Major, for example, does not scruple to profess to quote (work cited, p. 9) from Eusebius the very section that contains that vital statement as to Clement, while *leaving it out with no marks of omission*, and quoting only what follows. His Anglican lay readers may be left to say whether he has treated them honestly.

It is in a thesis thus conducted that the exponent begs the whole critical question by affirming that "the proof of this incorporation of Mark into Matthew and Luke is *overwhelming*, though it was

very long before it was recognized and accepted by Christian scholars." What ought to be argued, with an honest statement of the counter-case, is put as a now undisputed truth. The "very long" is in itself misleading. A large accession to the view of the priority of Mark had taken place before Renan had written his 'Vie de Jésus,' which propounds the "eye-witness" formula. And the present-day accession of Church of England scholars to a view long ago common on the Continent is simply the result of *their* recognition that that view is the only one which can be expected to save belief in the historicity of Jesus. Careful proof is the last thing they will attempt. It is not the objective, and it is not the method.

For Dr. Major it may be pleaded that M. Loisy likewise puts as a foregone conclusion the priority of Mark, saying not a word in the Introduction to his 'L'Évangile selon Marc' (1912) of the mass of countervailing considerations, though he is careful to indicate that there has been much redaction of the text, and that it is primarily a schemed and planned composition, not a simple collection of oral traditions. M. Loisy's attitude on the priority problem is here determined in the same way as that of the mere special pleaders. He too has made up his mind in advance that there must be a historical Jesus, and that to settle the priority of Mark is to help to establish the main case. All his careful study of the text is subordinated to the unwarranted assumption, made in silent disregard of the disproofs.

M. Loisy is indeed above the puerility of arguing, as do so many of the other combatants, that Mark is on the face of it the record of the reminiscences of an eye-witness, in respect of its

frequent vividness of description. The worst of that pretence is that it is put forward by men who know that precisely the same kind of claim was long made for the fourth gospel, and who have yet entirely abandoned that claim. By the spurious tests of vividness, emotionalism, and realism of detail, urged as they usually are without a grain of critical circumspection, John would stand highest of the four gospels as a historical record. It was these qualities that so long chained Renan, as they did Arnold, to faith in it. The Christian scholars who at length gave it up did so simply because they had abandoned the supernaturalist standpoint. They then obliviously proceeded to apply the old doubly-discredited argument to Mark, because they wished to establish that as a relatively historical document.

Any one who will fairly face the problem will speedily realize that the alleged "eye-witness" qualities ascribed to Mark are exhibited chiefly in regard to episodes which *cannot* have been witnessed by anybody. The writer tells us (i, 41) that "yearning with pity" Jesus puts out his hand to the leper, touches him, says "I will, be thou made clean; and straightway the leprosy departed from him, and he was made clean." To put *that* as history is to insult common sense. No theory of faith-healing that can pass muster even at Lourdes will support a story of instantaneous disappearance of leprosy. So with the detail of "asleep on the cushion" (iv, 38); it is grafted on a story of what did *not* happen, and is to be reckoned a deliberate stroke of fiction.[1] When,

[1] There is to be noted, however, that the writer may have seen a *picture* on the subject.

then, improving on Matthew and Luke, Mark (x, 16) makes Jesus "take up in his arms" the little children, as before (ix, 36) he had taken up one, and again (ix, 27) takes by the hand and lifts up the possessed child, as he touches and salivates the deaf and dumb and the blind man (vii, 33; viii, 23), who only in *this* gospel are cured—in such cases the only critical inference is that these "graphic" touches are *systematically* introduced, and proceed upon no testimony whatever.

Otherwise, what explanation can be offered of the *non*-appearance of all these details in Matthew and Luke? Would they have refused to represent Jesus as taking up little children in his arms if they had such a narrative before them, assigned to a pupil of Peter? Would they have shunned the thought of Jesus lifting up one whom he healed? Would they have refused to record miraculous cures by saliva? These and other objections, put in the past by scholars perfectly impartial on the documentary question, because loyally and solely intent on it, have never been met: they are simply outfaced by such pleas as we have already examined, the product of the *wish* to prove Mark the earliest gospel, in the hope thereby to establish a naturalistic where a supernaturalist belief in Jesus has collapsed before scientific common sense.

III

If the open-minded reader, provisionally admitting that there is *some* force in the objections to the priority claim for Mark, will just experimentally apply the hypothesis that Mark was written *after* the other synoptics, as was declared by Clement to be the report of the oldest Presbyters, he will find

that all manner of features which are inexplicable on the other view will come newly "in line." Taken as a planned adaptation of previous written matter, Mark is broadly intelligible as a purposive document.

1. It supplies a gospel freed from the hopeless contradictions of the birth-stories by leaving them out; and it thus presents an "Adoptionist" doctrine of Christ, known to have been current in the second century as against that of incarnation.

2. It mediates to a large extent between the Judaizing and Gentilizing tendencies which so long divided the Christian communities, making concessions in both directions. It puts aside the Judaic claims for the Apostles, certainly holds no brief for Peter, modifies without quite abandoning the primary Judaist attitude of the Master, as in the story of the healing of the Syrophœnician woman (vii, 26–30), and substantially leans to the Pauline side. It is thus a gospel planned to win adherents.

3. It concentrates largely on stories of miracle-working; on the testimonies of demoniacs, always reckoned in the East to have a supernormal significance; and on the power of faith to save believers from evil spirits.

4. Its "Roman" character, often acknowledged by adherents of both sides in the priority dispute, consists specially with a late origin, and needs no theory of authorship by the traditional interpreter of Peter to support it. That theory is further barred by the collapse of the legend of Peter's sojourn at Rome. And the frequent use of Romanized word-forms, as distinct from others, cannot be explained as a mere original employment of such forms by one who had lived in Rome

and wrote for Romans. When, for instance, in the story of the palsied man ordered to take up his bed and walk (Mk. ii, 4, 10, 12), Mark uses the word *krabatos*, which connects with the Latin *grabatus*, he is really putting a more fitting in place of a less fitting term. The term *klinē* (=a bedstead or couch) he uses where it is required (iv, 21 ; vii, 4, 30) ; the form *krabatos* (= a movable pallet) he uses where *that* is the specially required term—here purposely improving on Matthew and Luke, who represent the cured paralytic as told to take up and carry away what may be thought of as a *bedstead*. It is incredible that Matthew and Luke would here have wilfully written *couch* if they had before them the *pallet* of Mark.[1]

5. Again and again the "heightening" process is precisely that of a doctrinaire bent on enforcing a theological conception, as opposed to that of a man who reports something reported to him. In Mk. ii, after an opening which specially aims at heightening a physical picture, we have the scribes represented as debating "in their hearts," where Matthew and Luke make them "speak"; and the purpose is to exalt Jesus as knowing at once "in his spirit" what the scribes are *thinking*. It is really not discreet to speak of a writer as preserving the testimony of an "eye-witness" when, in order to display the Master's supernatural powers, he is thus expressly discarding what *might* have been credited as an eye-witness's testimony.

6. This gospel is palpably late in respect that, like Luke (ix, 27), it makes Jesus say (ix, 1):

[1] *Krabatos* is of course not a classical word. But it is still used, with the old *krabbatos* spelling, in the Modern Greek version of the N. T., in Mark and John, showing that it was and is a current word in Greece. It occurs also twice in Acts.

"There be some here.....which shall in no wise taste of death till they see the Kingdom of God come with power," where Matthew (xvi, 28) has: "till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." It is inconceivable that Matthew, seeing the prediction in Mark in the guarded form, should yet have preferred to make Jesus predict that contemporaries would see him returning in person. Mark's is plainly the later form, in that it substitutes for a falsified prediction one that might be said to have been fulfilled in the spread of the Church. It is characteristic of Dr. Major's logic that he claims priority for the corrected prediction *because* it is the more correct!

7. Equally significant of lateness, as Strauss notes, is Mark's omission (xiii, 18) of the second clause of Matthew's (xxiv, 20) "pray that your flight be not in the winter, neither on a sabbath." By the year 150 the sabbath had ceased to affect the life of professed Christians as such, at least outside of Jewish areas; and by that time nine-tenths of the existing Christians were in Gentile lands.

8. The scanty and negligent mention of the Temptation (i, 13), with its added phrase, "and he was with the wild beasts," is admitted even by advocates of the priority of Mark to be explicable only as a willed abbreviation of the account in Matthew, and it tells of a theological standpoint from which the Temptation episode was regarded with doubt or aversion, perhaps as more or less incompatible with the writer's view of the power of Satan.

Such are the general considerations which repel in advance the hypothesis that Mark is the earliest of the four gospels. The strongest counter-

consideration is, not any of the textual arguments which we have considered above, but the fact that Mark omits such a body of doctrine as the Sermon on the Mount. But this argument is repelled by the fact that that long section is also as a whole omitted in Luke, who supplies only the "Sermon on the Plain" (vi, 20–38), and other sections in different places. Why did Luke thus curtail and break up a mass of ethical discourse which is normally treasured by Christians? There are two possible answers. Either the long section in Matthew *was not in that gospel when Luke's was composed*, or the early compilers of Luke were aware that as a whole it was not Jesuine matter. In either case, the absence of the section from Mark can no more prove *its* priority than the brevity of the similar matter in Luke proves that gospel prior to Matthew.

The first proposition is probably the true one. The almost invariable divergence in terms from the Matthæan text in the multitude of passages in Justin Martyr which are claimed to be cited from our first gospel is a convincing proof that Justin had before him another collection. And this view is borne out by his divergences in other respects. "Mark," then, simply did not find in "Matthew" the Sermon on the Mount as we have it. Even the order, evidently derived from some other source, is in Justin quite different.

In this matter, finally, the real and vital difficulty is that entailed on those who regard Mark as the earliest of the canonical gospels, and as preserving the reminiscences of Peter. On *that* view, how is the omission of the Sermon on the Mount to be accounted for? Are they prepared to say that Peter either had no knowledge on the subject of

the longest and most important of the discourses ascribed to the Lord, or that, whatever reminiscences he had, he preferred to withhold them? On either view, it is plainly impossible to argue that the absence of the Sermon from Mark bars the inference of lateness. It is the total failure of the Marcan champions to face these cruxes that finally entitles us to dismiss their case as an unscientific attempt to save the belief in the historicity of Jesus by an arbitrary documentary claim.

IV

So far, our argument against the priority of Mark has been mainly destructive and defensive. There has recently emerged, however, a constructive theory which seems to the present writer to offer a new and satisfying solution of the entire problem. It is set forth in the work of Hermann Raschke, *Die Werkstatt des Markus-evangelisten*—"The Workshop of the Marcan Evangelist" (Eugen Diederichs Verlag, Jena, 1924; paper covered, 7 marks; bound, 8.50), one of several large recent German works on Mark of which, of course, we hear nothing from Dr. Major. To deal with its whole content would require a volume; and in the present connection it must suffice to present briefly its most important thesis—to wit, that *the Gospel of Marcion was made the Gospel of Mark*.

At first sight, this is as unmanageable a proposition as that so long discussed in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, and revived early in the twentieth by Mr. P. C. Sense—that our *Luke* is substantially Marcion's gospel, further redacted after his time, the original Luke having

been different. That view, long maintained in the Tübingen school, has never won much ground, and was early abandoned by some who had held it. Its vital difficulty is that *a* gospel of Luke, on a large scale, unquestionably had existed, being endlessly quoted from by Tertullian in his polemic against Marcion.

But Raschke's hypothesis stands really on a far stronger ground, there being no such primary obstacle in its way. For there is positively no evidence to show that what passed for "Mark" in Tertullian's day was a gospel at all in the modern sense. The existing gospel, so often claimed as the first, is precisely the hardest to trace before the latter part of the second century. There is nothing to show that Tertullian knew it at all. Herr Raschke's hypothesis, then, is well worth weighing.

English readers unfamiliar with the ecclesiastical history of Marcion (properly Markion), and the large modern literature in regard to him and his gospel, will find a sympathetic survey in Professor F. C. Burkitt's 'The Gospel History and its Transmission' (1906, Lect. ix); another in Canon Foakes-Jackson's 'Christian Difficulties of the Second and Twentieth Centuries' (1903); a good summary in Mr. Cassels' 'Supernatural Religion' (R. P. A.; pt. ii, ch. vii), and an interesting sketch by Harnack in the 'Encyclopædia Britannica.' Marcion may be described as the greatest Christian heresiarch of the second century, and his sect as one of the largest "dissenting bodies" in early Christian history for several centuries, after which it seems to have been absorbed in the Manichæan and other movements. Son, by late accounts, of a bishop of Sinope in Pontus, Marcion came to Rome about 139–42, and was an active

publicist for some twenty years. Producing treatises which earned for him the copious vituperation of eminent Fathers in the next century, and preparing for his followers a special gospel, which diverged from those then accepted by the Church, he built up a numerous and widespread sect of his own, and seems to have dreamt of converting the whole Church to his special creed.

The question, What was the substance of the gospel of Marcion? has been ably and immensely debated. It can be answered only after sifting the aspersive literature directed against the book by Tertullian, Irenæus, and Epiphanius, who discuss alike its alleged deficiencies and the heretical treatises of Marcion, which survive only fragmentarily in their quotations. Briefly, the indictment against him was that he had mutilated the gospel of Luke to suit his heretical purposes. Believing as he did in a God of Grace who was not the God of the Jews, and identifying the latter with the Demiourgos, the Creator God of the Old Testament, a mere God of Law, he conceived Jesus not as the begotten but as the adopted Son of the former, and as finally triumphing over the latter, who in the spirit of the law brought about his crucifixion. Marcion's gospel, then, would be adapted to these views, even if it did not expound them.

Let us now consider the outstanding charges of the heresy-hunting Fathers against the gospel arranged by Marcion :—

1. It was short ;
2. It had no Birth History ;
3. It lacked much of the teaching of the Lord.

All three characterizations apply to the existing

gospel of Mark. And now arises the question, *If* that gospel was current *as canonical* in Tertullian's and Irenæus's day, how came they to speak of Marcion's elision of the Birth Stories without noting that they are elided in Mark; or to comment on the brevity of Marcion's gospel when Mark's was less than half as long as Luke's; or to denounce Marcion for leaving out much of the Lucan record of the Lord's teaching when Mark did the same? Herr Raschke argues (p. 34) that Irenæus was so completely under the fixed idea of a mutilation of Luke that he could not see the identity of Marcion's gospel with the canonical Mark. This is a difficult conception. As a matter of fact, Irenæus (III, xi, 8), putting his mystical thesis that the gospels must be four, neither more nor less, cites Mark as beginning in the manner of our text, and making "a compendious and cursory narrative." That is in effect what he denounces Marcion for doing. The question thus insistently arises whether the existing text of Irenæus, a Latin translation made at the end of the third or the beginning of the fourth century, represents what Irenæus wrote in the second. If it does, Raschke's solution must stand, for the inconsistency of the attitude in the existing treatise is gross. That Marcion had before him a primitive compilation of miracle stories, ascribed to Mark, is quite conceivable; but our Mark is not the disorderly thing described by Papias; and apart from the passage cited there is nothing, I think, in Irenæus to show any familiarity with our text. If he had a copy before him, how could he endorse it while denouncing Marcion?

The same question arises in regard to the whole polemic of Tertullian against Marcion. That

Father writes ('Against Marcion,' iv, 2): "We lay it down as our first position that the evangelical Testament [*instrumentum*] has apostles for its authors, to whom was assigned by the Lord himself this office of publishing the gospel. Since, however, there are apostolic men also, they are yet not alone.....Of the apostles, therefore, John and Matthew *first* instil faith into us; whilst of apostolic men, Luke and Mark renew it afterwards. These all start with the same principles of the faith, so far as relates to the one only God the Creator and his Christ, *how that he was born of the Virgin, and came to fulfil the law and the prophets*."

The conflict between this assertion and the facts as to Mark is so direct that it is hard to understand how it has been ignored. Firstly, "Mark," as it stands, is quite falsely described as stating that Jesus was born of the Virgin.

But no less great is the further difficulty that while Tertullian cites frequently from Matthew, less frequently from John, and hundreds of times from Luke, *he never once cites Mark in his whole polemic.*

Thirdly, when Tertullian cites from Luke the passage on the question "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (xviii, 18), he makes no allusion whatever to v. 19*a*, "Why callest thou me good?", though he discusses the rest of the verse. Now, we know that Marcion was described by Hippolytus as stressing the question, "Why call ye me good?", and by Epiphanius as reading: "Call me not good." The question arises, then, whether for Tertullian the text Lk. xviii, 19, existed. But if we interpret Mk. x, 18, as the later Fathers did, there arise two more questions: (1) Whether Marcion's original text may have been modified; and (2) whether Hippolytus and Epiphanius knew of both

the Lucan and the Marcan texts when they censured Marcion.

These, however, are secondary difficulties. The primal mystery is that Tertullian, professing, as his text stands, to have a Mark, never once cites it; and, describing Marcion as cutting out the preliminary narratives of Luke, never seeks to account for the same procedure in Mark. Either his allusion to Mark is an interpolation in his text, and the above italicized passage another, or the Mark he possessed was an entirely different document from ours—conceivably a mere recital of wonder-works, such as Papias seems to suggest, with no teaching whatever. If the latter alternative be reckoned unlikely, the other can hardly be called so. The corruption of the texts of the Fathers is a scandal since the time of Erasmus.

V

So insuperable is this difficulty from the traditionist point of view that we are led at once to ask whether the gospel of Marcion, alleged to be framed by deliberate curtailment of Luke, is not substantially the document preserved as the canonical Mark. Plainly Mark, as it stands, broadly *suited* Marcion's standpoint. If he did not adopt Mark as we have it, must it not have been simply because it was not there? Are we not *forced* to infer that Mark as it stands (with allowance for probable modifications after it was adopted by the Church in general) was made by Marcion; largely from Luke, but also from Matthew and other sources? Epiphanius called the Marcionite gospel a Luke lacking the beginning, the middle, and the end, "like a garment eaten away by moths." As

Herr Raschke comments, that description just fits Mark.

When we come to the specific charges of mutilation, the surmise is confirmed. Epiphanius, for instance, complains that Marcion's gospel mutilates the text about Jonah, saying merely that "no sign will be given," and lacks the mention of Nineveh and the Queen of the South and Solomon. *But all this applies to our gospel of Mark!* As Herr Raschke puts it, Epiphanius was *commenting on the text of Mark*. When yet other patristic charges of mutilation against Marcion are found to impinge on Mark, and further charges of adding to Luke are likewise found applicable to Mark, the inference, Marcion's gospel = Mark, becomes so urgent that only a new body of evidence, accounting for these strange coincidences, can repel it.

Nor will it suffice to produce from Mark texts which may seem incompatible with a Marcionitic origin. The ultimate acceptance of a Marcionite gospel by the Church would be certain to involve *some* measure of adaptation. Our Mark has apparently been mutilated at the close, and then finished by another hand. Further, the Marcionites are described by the Father as themselves altering their gospel from day to day. On the other hand, the wide diffusion of the Marcionite book can very well account for the acceptance by the Church of a gospel which lacked the birth stories and much else. Its brevity may have been found advantageous by the Marcionites; and the attractions which obviously operated for them would serve the Church in the same fashion. That Mark was looked-at askance in the early Church is admitted all round.

A general hypothesis suggests itself. We are told concerning Marcion that towards the end of

his life he sought to be received back into the Church, and was prepared to invite his followers to return with him, but was prevented by death. Our Mark, then, might be his gospel, with the preliminary addition of the first twenty verses, and other changes. According to Tertullian, his gospel began with an account of the coming of Jesus to Capernaum, and being hailed in the synagogue as the Holy One of God. Marcion may have prefixed the preceding matter by way of partial accommodation; or one of his sect may have done it. An orthodox hand would hardly have been content with so little.

On this view, Marcion's gospel in its first form may very well have gone on circulating in his own sect, keeping that form for Tertullian. As Dr. Burkitt candidly avows,[1] "one of the unsolved problems of the New Testament literature is *to supply the reasons why Mark became part of the Church's Canon.*" Is there any better solution than that above suggested?

Finally, there are special doctrinal features of Mark which a Marcionite origin best accounts for. The Anglicans who are now proclaiming it as the eye-witness gospel lay special stress on its absolute prohibition of divorce. But that is declared to have been an item in the teaching of Marcion! Denying that Mark can have had Matthew before him, the Rev. Arthur Wright ('Some N. T. Problems,' 1898, p. 264) asks: "What sort of Christians would desire to purchase brevity by the excision of the story of our Lord's birth, the Sermon on the Mount,.....with the longer parables and much discourse matter?" The answer now obtrudes

[1] *The Gospel History and its Transmission*, ed. 1925, p. 61.

itself: "Heretical Christians, such as the Marcionites are declared to have been, by the Fathers who denounced them." So with the passage, stressed by Schmiedel as biographical, in which the friends and relatives of Jesus speak of him as "beside himself." That, too, could come from anti-Judaic heretics.

One of the notable differences between Mark and Matthew is that the former lacks these four Matthæan texts:—

xi, 25. Jesus.....said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth.
— 26. Yea, Father, for so it was well pleasing in thy sight.
— 27. All things have been delivered unto me of my Father, etc.
xxviii, 19. Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

The only passages in Mark which thus name the Father are:—

xiii, 32. Of that day or that hour knoweth no one..... neither the Son, but the Father.
xiv, 36. Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee.

Dr. Burkitt,[1] at the end of his chapter on the Literary Originality of the Gospel of Mark, explicitly endorses the pronouncement of Wellhausen that "Mark was known to the other Synoptists in the same form and with the same contents as we have it now." Yet on the previous page he approves of "the hypothesis that the Eschatological Discourse in Mk. xiii once circulated, very much in its present form, as a separate fly-sheet; and that probably from this fly-sheet, and not from the gospels, was derived the eschatological chapter at the end of the Didachê." Now, if the Eschatological Dis-

[1] *The Gospel History and its Transmission*, 3rd ed., p. 64, citing Wellhausen, *Einleitung in die drei ersten Evangelien*, p. 57.

course be admitted to be thus detachable, the natural inference is that it is an addition to Mark, even as the story of the Tragedy is an addition to all the gospels. Then Mark is left without *any* naming of "the Father" in its primary form; and this is exactly what we might expect in the gospel of Marcion, who repugned against the conception of Jesus as the son of Jehovah.

Dr. Major (p. 15) ascribes to Mark a "primitive" Christology. But it was the express claim of Marcion that the principles of Christianity had been corrupted, and that true Christians must return to the pure Pauline doctrine. Dr. Major implies that Mark embodies the old "Jewish Christianity," and is pre-Pauline in doctrine. But it is now recognized by many scholars that the Christology of Mark is Pauline, as was that of Marcion. Dr. Major, who never lets his readers know that in M. Loisy's view Mark cannot be the work of a follower of Peter, or that in Schmiedel's view Peter never was at Rome, is merely playing the special pleader. And it is as a result of the loss of critical vision set up by special pleading that he cites the observation that a charge of special dullness against the disciples "is only found in Mark." *That* is a mark not of "Jewish Christianity" but of Gentilism. Raschke's theory has yet to run the gauntlet of criticism; but it is plausibility itself in contrast with the other.

VI

A completely scientific study of the problem of Mark, it is clear, must now mean an approach from a deliberately impartial point of view. It must give fair play to *every* hypothesis, Raschke's

included, recognizing that the à priori attitude of the majority of the partisans of Mark, from Wilke to Major, is untenable; that their arguments are satisfactory only to those who start with their presupposition; and that only hypotheses which reasonably account for all the phenomena can pass as valid. This complete scrutiny will involve, for the true student, the facing of the theoretic method of Dr. Arthur Drews, developed in his treatise on 'Das Markus-Evangelium' (1921), before the appearance of Raschke's, and his 'Die Entstehung des Christentums' (1924). A searching study may end in the challenging of the newer interpretative methods at many points; but it will result in a much firmer hold of the problem than has been possible on the partisan principles now being popularized by "progressive" Anglican clergymen. Such publicists—from whom we should distinguish Dr. Burkitt—differ from their orthodox colleagues only in substituting a quasi-biographical sentiment for a sentiment which clings to the whole supernaturalist tradition: they have in no wise subordinated sentiment to scientific truth-seeking.

And their work is ultimately in vain, for they do but conserve a Jesus-figure which cannot be brought into constructive connection with the rise of the Christian movement. Mark's gospel no more reveals a primary gospel of Jesus than do the others. "Supposing it were agreed that Mark *was* the first of the four gospels," I once asked a demi-semi-orthodox adherent of that view, "what do you think would be gained towards establishing a belief in the gospel history, as you call it?" "Why, that there had been an actual man called Jesus Christ, whom his disciples did not take to be born of a virgin," was the reply. "And who

taught his disciples—what?" I pressed. At that point

> something sealed
> The lips of that evangelist,

who suddenly seemed to divine that a Teacher whose main work consisted in casting out devils and saying "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand," can have had but little work for twelve disciples, who could operate on devils only in his absence.

All attempted biographies of Jesus bring us thus finally to the problem of his alleged historic *work*—his intangible teaching to a nebulous apostolate who never revealed what his gospel had been, and whose supposed attempt to make a gospel of *him* as a sacrifice was supplemented by a body of ethical teaching which cannot critically be regarded as coming from him or them. The historic problem of the Rise of Christianity remains the ultimate one, and to its solution the Gospel according to Mark contributes nothing, save by revealing, on analysis, its own factitiousness.

Dr. Burkitt makes the notable pronouncement (p. 79) that Mark is the only gospel which "gives an intelligible account" of the process by which Jesus came in decisive conflict with the Jewish authorities. If that be so, the inference may well be that it is the work of a writer creating a certain historical order out of a chaos presented by his predecessors. But Dr. Burkitt's theory of the main plan of Jesus will hardly meet the difficulties of the case. It is, as I understand him, that at a quite early stage in the ministry Jesus devoted himself chiefly to educating his disciples. Let the reader, after re-reading Mark, ask himself what there is to show for the hypothesis.

PREPARATORY LITERATURE

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